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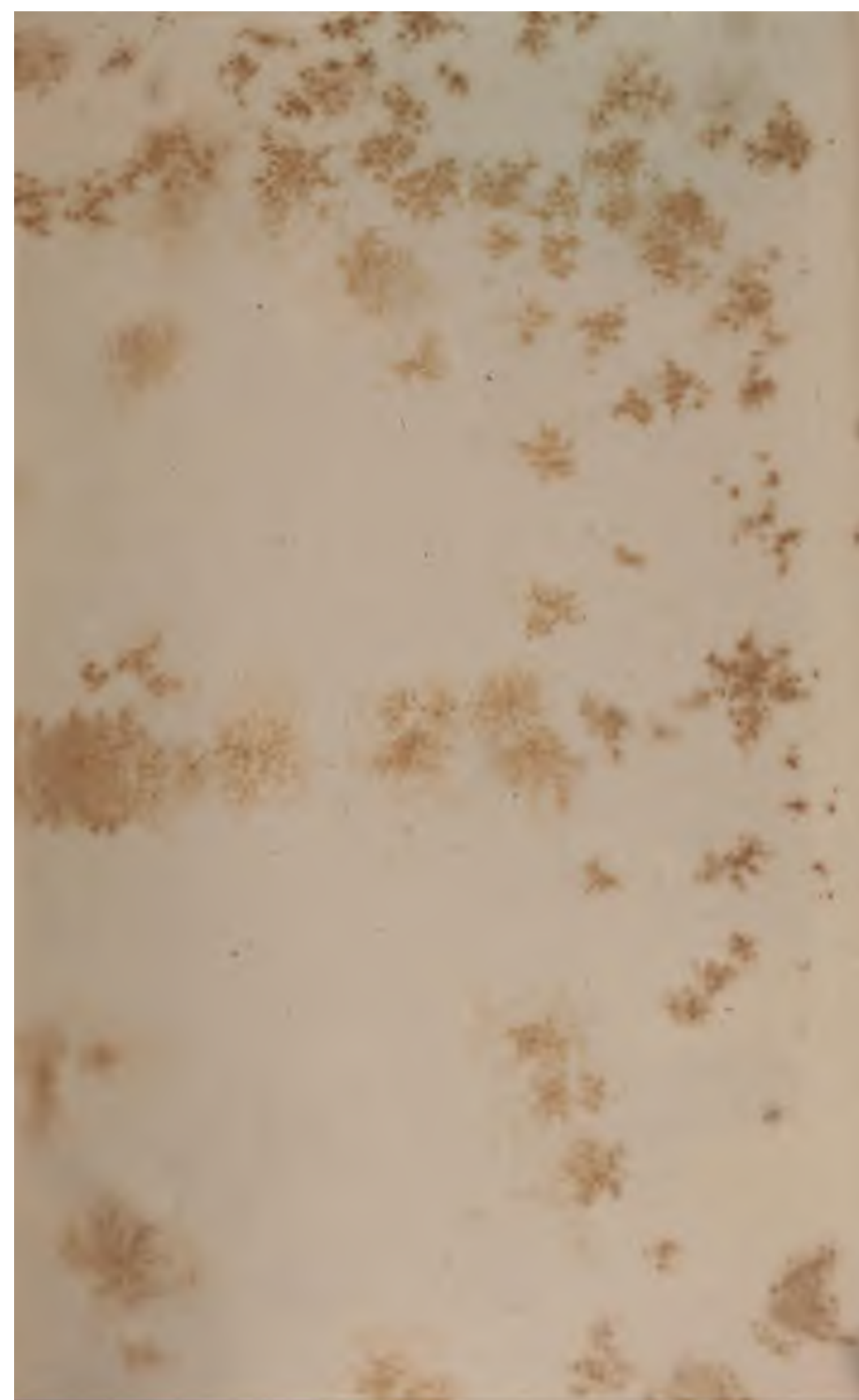














BELGRAVIA

AN

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BELGRAVIA

NOVEMBER 1877.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE IRON BELTS.

SOME people are so clever that they find it easy to discover other men's motives; but Raymond Pennicwick was not of this clever sort, and it is therefore not surprising that he failed to account to himself for his father's behaviour as respected the wife and daughter of his dead friend. His disinclination—nay, his downright refusal—to visit them, on pretence of engagements in town, shocked Raymond's sense of propriety; no matter how painful might have been the interview, it seemed to him downright cowardice to shirk so obvious a duty. On the other hand, there was his father's offer to benefit them pecuniarily, which, if not handsome, might be deemed sufficient, in any person not bound to them by ties of blood, and which he felt to be liberal when taken into consideration with his father's views about money matters. Under any other circumstance he would not even to himself have admitted so much to his parent's detriment; had the persons concerned been indifferent to him, he would have made excuses, and, so far as his conscience permitted, even taken the other side; but when our feelings are excited both for and against, we are liable to have the operation which by oculists is called 'couching' performed on us. Here, then, was a man by nature loth to part with his money, making a liberal provision for individuals who had no legal claim on him, but at the same time so wanting in proper feeling as not to see the necessity of telling them with his own lips of how it had fared with their nearest and dearest in his last hours.

Nor could his son honestly find an apology for him on the score of extreme sensibility. That the subject of Conway's death

should be distasteful to his father was natural enough; but that he should have ignored it, as he had done, throughout their late interview, was inexplicable to Raymond. To *him*, at least, the details might have been confided; and at all events some hint might have been given of Conway's state of mind and behaviour; above all, those last fond words should have been repeated to him, which, however feeble in themselves, have so intense a significance for those who love and survive us. It was incredible that a man like Conway, tender-hearted and passionately attached to at least one of the members of his little family, could have left the world without a word of farewell.

Raymond's duty, however, was plain enough: he must go down to Richmond; make out the best case for his father that was possible, and, above all, endeavour to persuade the widow and her daughter to receive assistance from his hand. One cause of embarrassment was upon this occasion spared to him; his errand was such that no allusion to his love for Nelly need be apprehended from him; for though the subject was forbidden, it was in his thoughts, and could be read by her, he fancied (and not without reason), in his tell-tale face and tone.

The house at Richmond bore externally the same appearance as usual; he was pleased to see that the tiny plot of ground that lay between it and the road was as full of flowers and kept as neatly as before, though he little knew that this was the work of Nelly's own hands, and not of those of the 'odd man,' who had heretofore performed the duties of gardener. But, within, the signs of the altered circumstances of its inmates were at once apparent. The door was 'answered' to him no longer by the trim housemaid, but by a little maid-of-all-work of tender years, who held it half open in her hand, after the manner of her kind, as doubtful whether the visitor was to be admitted, or left standing on the steps outside, till his errand should be made known to 'missis.' The presentation of his card seemed only to add to her difficulties; she turned it over and over as if it was a cryptogram which she could not decipher (for, indeed, the art of reading was unknown to her), and then running to the foot of the stairs, exclaimed, 'Oh, please, Miss Conway, here is a young man as wants you.'

It was quite true, but under the circumstances a little embarrassing, and doubtless accounted for Nelly's heightened colour when she presented herself.

She greeted him with a sad smile and a grasp of the hand, which, though eloquent of friendship, somehow seemed to speak of love's divorce; and led the way into the parlour.

'You have seen your father, Raymond,' were her first words.

'Yes, Nelly. I have seen him. He is, I am sorry to say, far from well; he looks aged and even broken. I think,' he added, 'if your mother saw him she would acknowledge, notwithstanding her prejudice against him, that he had a heart.'

'Do not let us talk of prejudices, Raymond, at a time like this,' said Nelly reprovingly; 'I feel as if I stood beside my father's grave. What word does Mr. Pennicuick bring us of him?'

'He has little to say, Nelly; and it pains him to say even that little. I have come to-day in his place——'

'What? Will not Mr. Pennicuick come to see us?'

'Nay, it is not "will;" he is really not equal to it just at present. He is exhausted by grief and travel, and he has sent me as his messenger to say all that is kind and—and—friendly, and to make a certain proposition to you which I hope—I do most earnestly hope—Mrs. Conway and yourself may take into your favourable consideration.'

It had cost poor Raymond a good deal to say this much, and, though he was conscious that he had not expressed it very happily, it was a great relief to him to have 'got it over;' his disappointment therefore was considerable when Nelly only replied, 'And what have you to tell us about dear papa?' as though she had not even heard him.

'He met his fate, it seems, dear Nelly, very suddenly; directly he was condemned, my father started for Shanghai to endeavour to procure his pardon, or at least his reprieve, and when he got back—all was over.'

'What? was there no message? no good-bye? no word to me, nor to my mother?'

'He sent his love, his dear love; he bade you not grieve for him over-much, and blessed you.'

'And was there no line of farewell? Even a scrap of his handwriting, he must have known, would have been inexpressibly dear to me, and I am sure he would have thought of that.'

'He did not think of it, dear Nelly, or at least there was none. Consider the frightful position in which he found himself. The suddenness of his calamity, the shock——'

Nelly shook her head. 'It was not like papa, Raymond,' interrupted she. 'He was so brave, so careless of self, and so thoughtful for others. Even when I was a child, and he upon the eve of battle, he once wrote——' Here she broke down and sobbed as though her heart would break.

'Don't cry, don't cry,' whispered Raymond imploringly; 'I can't bear it, darling.'

Her sorrow so distressed him that he was himself unconscious

of the loving epithet he used ; moved though she was, it did not however escape Nelly's notice, and, though she did not resent it, it had the effect of calming her at once.

'Forgive me for my selfishness, Raymond ; it is wrong to give such way to weakness. There must be some mistake, I think, about dear papa, which will be cleared up hereafter. You say Mr. Pennicwick is ill ; he may have forgotten things which, to us in our forlorn condition, are of great moment. We must have patience a little longer.'

'But indeed it is not that, dear Nelly. My father is quite himself. He has been thinking a great deal about you—you and your mother,' he added hastily, for he saw the colour rush into the young girl's cheek : it was terrible to him that she should believe even for a moment that he was referring to his suit. 'What he wishes to do—the only service he can now do for his dead friend—is to protect his dear ones ; he cannot control fate, but he can mitigate its harshness. You must permit him to do that, Nelly.'

'I don't quite understand, Raymond.'

'That is my fault ; I am stupid in expressing myself. My father wishes to help you in a material way : and yet, so that you should feel no sense of obligation. Three or four hundred a year is a mere nothing to him ; while to you, with your simple habits and economical ways, it would be of some service. He wishes, without condition of any kind,' added Raymond significantly, 'to make you, that is your mother and yourself, this modest allowance.'

'It is very kind and very liberal of him, Raymond, but——'

'No, it is not liberal,' interrupted the young man emphatically ; 'it is purposely the reverse of liberal, in order that you may feel no sense of dependence or obligation ; the only stipulation, indeed, he made was that there should be no thanks.'

'I have done your father wrong, Raymond, for I did not think him capable of this ; I thank him, or, if he will not have thanks, I thank you for him ; it is most generous and most delicate ; I for my part feel as—as—grateful to him as though we could accept it.'

'And why, in Heaven's name, should you not accept it ? Does a man owe nothing to his best friend when he is dead ? no debt which a sigh or a tear cannot discharge ? Is it not as cruel to deny him such a mournful pleasure as to refuse to allow him to pay him the last rites, to follow him to his grave ? I cannot think you will be so—so——'

'So churlish, if you will, Raymond,' put in Nelly, with a sad smile. 'It is one of the many disadvantages of poverty that it

often makes one appear ungracious. For my own part, I must needs say that I prefer to keep my independence. But this is a matter to which I have no right to reply for certain. It is my mother who must decide.'

'And you will use your influence to induce her to decline this offer?'

'No: since you wish it, Raymond, I will be quite passive.'

'That is because you have such confidence in her prejudices that you are sure——'

'Hush! here is mamma,' said Nelly hurriedly: and at the same moment Mrs. Conway entered the room.

Among the many ills to which obesity is subject there is this peculiar misfortune, that when in sorrow the very stout and florid do not evince it by their appearance: we are accustomed to associate melancholy with a lean frame and a pale face, and fat people cannot 'bring themselves down,' like jockeys, to suit the exigencies of the occasion.

The misfortune that had befallen Mrs. Conway had not one whit reduced her ample proportions, or robbed her cheeks of a single rose—or peony. It was only to a close observer that the signs of trouble were manifest, in the lack-lustre eye and the trembling hand. Her voice, too, had lost its former testiness, and become soft and gentle. 'I am glad to see you, Raymond,' she began; then suddenly stopped as though she read his errand and in a harsh, almost defiant tone, inquired, 'What is your news?'

'My father has come home, Mrs. Conway.'

'I concluded as much,' said she, closing her eyes and pressing her lips together like one in pain. 'Well?'

He knew this was no inquiry about his father's health, for she never gave herself the trouble to affect an interest in him. It was simply a sign to him that she was prepared to listen to whatever he might have to say.

'The steamer will arrive at Southampton on Tuesday, Mrs. Conway, my father having been obliged to leave it from ill health, and return overland. It will bring four large cases, I was instructed to tell you, directed hither. I believe nothing has been left behind of your poor husband's property. His own servant, who was deeply attached to him, assisted by my father himself, undertook——'

'What does your father say?' The interruption was not violent, though abrupt, but the tone of it was singularly keen and searching.

'He has little to say, dear Mrs. Conway. The catastrophe, it

seems, was very sudden and unexpected, and my father's mind was wholly taken up with efforts—vain, alas! to avert it. He started for Shanghai after but a brief interview—it was all that was allowed him—and except that your dear husband sent you a loving farewell, and invoked God's blessing upon you both——'

'That is false,' put in Mrs. Conway, in a terrible voice; 'there was more than that.'

'Indeed, dear madam, my father assures me that there was nothing else.'

'He lies.'

There was a painful silence. It was plain that argument with the poor lady was out of the question. Her face was the very incarnation of obstinate conviction.

'Dear mamma,' said Nelly softly, 'pray remember that you are speaking to Mr. Pennicuck's son.'

Mrs. Conway did not seem to hear her; her eyes were rivetted upon Raymond's face, but her thoughts were far away.

'Why does he not come here?' inquired she presently in sharp, incisive tones. 'Why does he keep in hiding?'

'My father is greatly exhausted with his journey, and, as I have told you, very unwell. He did not feel equal, just at present, to converse with you on so sad a subject.'

'Not equal? Bah! he had not courage enough.'

There was another painful pause.

'Perhaps,' said Nelly hesitatingly, 'there may be a letter, or something, in dear papa's travelling desk; I know he took it with him wherever it was possible.'

She looked inquiringly at Raymond, so that he was obliged to speak.

'Indeed, dear Nelly, I am afraid there was nothing of the kind. My father made search everywhere, as it was his duty to do, in case there should be a will.'

'We are beggars, of course,' observed Mrs. Conway calmly.

'No, indeed, madam,' began Raymond; and he was about at once to mention his father's offer, when Nelly restrained him. She was right, he felt; it was a most inopportune time to speak to Mrs. Conway upon such a subject.

'We are not beggars, mamma, unless we beg,' said Nelly quietly; 'and there is no need to beg.'

'It is as well to beg as to slave oneself to death as you are doing,' replied Mrs. Conway bitterly. Then she burst into tears and began to rock herself to and fro upon her chair, quite regardless and perhaps unconscious of the presence of her visitor.

'Go, Raymond, go,' whispered Nelly; and the young man rose

with the intention of withdrawing at once without exciting the widow's observation. He was distressed and shocked to an extreme degree, not only at the poor lady's condition, but at the words she had spoken to her daughter, which confirmed his worst suspicions as to the efforts she was making to maintain the little household. It was painful to him that Nelly should work at all for her daily bread; but that she should be overworking herself was terrible. And yet the reception that his father's proposition had met with, even thus far, and from her whom he had thought the less likely of the two to oppose herself to it, was most discouraging. In his hurry to escape he tripped in the carpet, and overturned a chair.

'What is that?' exclaimed the widow excitedly.

'Nothing, mamma: Raymond is going away.'

'Why does he not wish me good-bye?' said Mrs. Conway in her old fretful manner. 'And yet, why should he? Why should anyone care for an old and beggared woman?'

'Indeed, Mrs. Conway, you must not talk like that,' said Raymond softly. 'There are bright days in store for you yet, I hope.'

'Bright days! for *me*? No, lad, no. I might have had them once, perhaps; but that is all over now.' She murmured something to herself that sounded like 'the night cometh, the night cometh,' and Raymond noted for the first time how old and ill she looked. 'He was fond of you, Ray, when you were a child,' she continued caressingly: 'he was always fond of children. He had a kind heart before I turned it into stone.'

Again, at an appealing look from Nelly, the young man was about to leave the room, when the widow called him back.

'Don't send Raymond away without a good-bye, Nelly, though that is all we have to give him. He is a good lad, though of an evil stock. I mind the days when I have dandled you in my arms, boy, and strove to be to you what your mother might have been had not Heaven been kinder to her. She died ere she reached your age. I was young then myself; and Arthur—that was your father, girl—he was my lover and my husband too. Do you think I turned his heart to stone, Nelly?'

'Indeed, mamma, you did not. You cannot be conscious of your own words. He was the kindest, gentlest being to the last.'

'Right, right, Nelly; so he was. Not one to leave us without a word, without a line, to die without a sign of love to those belonging to him. No, no. No, no—— But you are Ralph Pennicwick's son, lad. Well, well; I would not say a word to wound you. Do you mind if I kissed you, just once—an old

woman like me—for the sake of old times when you cared to kiss me? The old times—the old times that were so short because I turned my Arthur's heart to stone!

Raymond could bear the scene no longer, but, having affectionately embraced the poor lady and pressed Nelly's hand, fled from the house. If he had been alone with the widow his position would have been sufficiently distressing; but that her daughter should be present while she thus reproached herself for what might be almost termed the conduct of her life, was intolerable. What made it the more impressive was that this was the first occasion on which either he or Nelly had heard Mrs. Conway own herself in the least to blame as respected the estrangement between herself and her husband. She must have been moved indeed to have made such an admission; and the burst of affection with which she had bidden good-bye to Raymond had been scarcely less surprising than her self-reproach.

In after days, when subsequent events had made that interview memorable, Raymond often pondered on it: how sad and strange that condemnation had sounded from the lips of the self-accused! how unexpected had been that outbreak of affection and remorse! It was as though the barrier that had shut in the poor woman's feelings for twenty years had given way beneath the pressure of her love, and laid bare her broken heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PICTURE SALE.

ON the afternoon after Raymond's visit, Mr. and Mrs. Wardlaw presented themselves at the Cedars, to pay their first formal call on the widow since her bereavement: and, much to their astonishment, found her from home. She was wont to go abroad but seldom, even before her late misfortune, and rarely without being accompanied by her daughter; but on this occasion she had left the house, while Nelly was 'marketing' in the morning, leaving word with the little maid that she had business in London, and might not be back till late in the day. Nelly was not absolutely alarmed at her absence, but she had a sense of disquiet which made the arrival of the friendly couple a great relief to her. They endeavoured to allay her anxiety by offering a number of reasons, more or less ingenious, but all improbable, for her mother's leaving home; and though these carried no conviction with them, the very expression of their confidence that all was right, was vaguely comforting. They supplied that need of 'company'—where the company is sympathetic—which we all

feel when in nervous suspense ; and their conversation prevented her from dwelling upon the matter, and helped to pass the time until her apprehensions (as she hoped) should be removed by her mother's return.

'I am come here, my dear young lady,' said Mr. Wardlaw gravely, 'upon a business errand. I want to get the advantage of you in a little bargain or two.'

'Yes,' put in Mrs. Wardlaw, 'and you must be very firm, my dear Nelly, and if possible grasping. You must not be taken in by John's apparent frankness. He has been all his life connected with commerce, and has been successful in it, and you may be quite certain therefore that he will cheat you if he can.'

To see this honest merchant laugh and roll in enjoyment of this shameful accusation—which he did not attempt to combat—was a spectacle that drew a smile from Nelly in spite of all her troubles.

'I know your husband's character well, dear Mrs. Wardlaw,' she replied, 'and believe him capable of anything; but, as Raymond used to quote from the classics when we remonstrated with him for crossing Hyde Park so late at night in the garotting times, "he who has empty pockets can afford to laugh at the foot-pad;" I have nothing about which to bargain with Mr. Wardlaw, and therefore cannot be overreached.'

'What! Have you sold all your pictures?'

'Oh, my pictures!' said Nelly, laughing; 'well, I am afraid I have still one or two on hand. But Mr. Jones, the print-seller in the High Street, has got more in his window than he can accommodate, and if you really wish—the prices are marked on them!' Here she stopped short with a little blush.

'What! you don't mean to say those beautiful views of the river, that Jones has had these three weeks, are yours?' continued Mrs. Wardlaw.

'They are my little attempts at water-colours,' said Nelly shyly; 'but I should be sorry that, out of mere good nature, Mr. Wardlaw should disfigure the walls of Coromandel House with them.'

'But I tell you they are *beautiful*,' continued Mrs. Wardlaw; 'I was saying so to John the other day; only he answered, "Stuff and nonsense! do you suppose any pictures can be worth buying at those prices?"'

'My dear young lady, don't believe her,' cried Mr. Wardlaw, turning a deep purple. 'I know a good thing when I see it, as well as any man that ever made a bid at Christie's. Said I to myself, "Those are Miss Nelly's, and she is very foolish to let

Jones exhibit them at so low a figure ;" but I was not going to say so, for my wife would have said, "Buy 'em," which would have depreciated your valuable works in the market, and at the same time put a commission into Jones's pocket. Now, I am come here expressly to save the commission. So let us go up to the studio, and get to business at once.'

'Well, I never!' cried Mrs. Wardlaw, holding up her hands. 'I did not believe it was in the man to tell such a tale. If you can talk like that, John—with such hypocrisy and deceit—why, how do I know that it is business takes you up to town so regular, *as you say*, and sometimes until the small hours? Oh, Nelly, Nelly, what a revelation have you been the means of making of the depravity of man!'

'Well, I didn't think your husband was such a diplomatist, I must say,' said Nelly, smiling.

'Ah! he's all that and worse,' put in Mrs. Wardlaw gravely.

'Nay, if it comes to long words, let us see the pictures,' exclaimed the culprit; 'there is something in canvas as seems to draw 'em out. Even a sensible man, when he gets opposite a picture, begins to talk outlandishly; it's "delicacy of tone," or "refinement of treatment," or "cheery skewero," or such like; I sometimes think it's something in the oil as draws it out, though it's almost as bad with the water-colours.'

'It is plain you are not an art-critic,' said Nelly, as she led the way to her little studio, 'and I am afraid you have not a reverent mind.'

'Yet John knows what's what,' whispered Mrs. Wardlaw, who thought perhaps that her husband had been 'run down' enough. 'He's got an eye in his head.'

Which was true enough, although he could not have put an 'h' before the latter to save his life.

'Oh, ho! so these are the shadoovers are they?' observed Mr. Wardlaw, as he looked round the room, the walls of which, notwithstanding her contributions to Mr. Jones's shop, still showed some half-dozen specimens of Nelly's handiwork. 'Why, here's the "ouse" itself. A very pretty little thing, upon my word.'

'It's lovely,' observed Mrs. Wardlaw, enthusiastically, 'and as like as like; why, there's the creeper as though it was a-growing, and the balcony with the flowers looking as if one could smell 'em, and the kitchen window looking as nat'ral ——'

'Hush! hold your tongue, silly,' interrupted her lord and master; 'that ain't the way to cheapen a picture. Why, the wall is out of drawing, miss; and the top of the house too big for the

bottom; and as for the 'cheery skewero'—here he stepped back and made a telescope of his hand—'why, it's evident it's the work of a beginner.'

'John, for shame!' exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw indignantly; 'I say it's all lovely.'

'Indeed, Mrs. Wardlaw, your husband is quite right,' said Nelly. 'Mamma herself pointed out that the perspective was amiss; and of course it's true that I am but a beginner.'

'Nay, I don't say I don't admire it,' observed Mr. Wardlaw in less critical tones. 'There are many points about it that I do admire. And it's like the house, or how should I have known it at the first glance? The garden, too, if it wasn't so confoundedly steep——'

'I'm afraid it's rather like a hanging garden,' put in Nelly good-humouredly.

'What, for clothes? Indeed it's not, my dear,' said Mrs. Wardlaw encouragingly. 'Nobody would mistake it for a place of that kind.'

'Well, I tell you what, Miss Nelly,' cried the merchant, 'I'll give you ten guineas for it as it stands, without the frame.'

Nelly smiled sadly, and shook her head.

'Quite right!' exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw vehemently; 'it is worth twenty if it's worth a guinea.'

'I doubt very much, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, if it is worth a guinea,' observed Nelly quietly. 'I am sure your good husband bid at least five times its value. But the fact is the little sketch is not for sale.'

'She understands all about it,' said Mr. Wardlaw admiringly. 'That is exactly the right thing to say, my dear. Come, I will give you five-and-twenty guineas for it.' The honest merchant was really in earnest; he felt as though in his favourite atmosphere of the auction room, and it excited him prodigiously.

'Indeed, Mr. Wardlaw, I was quite serious,' said Nelly gravely; 'that sketch was done for my dear father, when—when we little thought that he was to be taken from us; it was painted for him as a birthday gift, at the very time, alas! that he was doomed to death, and it seems somehow, as it were, a part of him. So, you see, it can never be for sale.'

'Oh lawks!' cried Mr. Wardlaw under his breath, and wiping his face with his pocket-handkerchief. 'This is what comes of fancy prices, a thing I always set myself against on principle.'

'I am so sorry we have hurt your feelings, darling,' said Mrs. Wardlaw soothingly; then, turning sharply round upon her husband, 'How could you be such a fool, John? The very least

you can do is to take all the other pictures, at dear Nelly's own estimate of their value.'

'Indeed,' laughed Nelly, through her tears, 'if Mr. Wardlaw did that, he would not ruin himself. I am conscious that they are but very poor things. Do you suppose,' she continued with deep feeling, 'that I do not know why you two are here to-day? You wish to encourage me in the calling to which I have ventured to apply myself. You want to persuade me that these indifferent productions of mine are really worth the lavish sums you are prepared to offer for them. You are not my true patrons, but something infinitely better and dearer—my true friends. I am not so blinded by self-conceit as not to know that I have everything to learn—except your kindness, which I knew beforehand.'

'I will give five hundred pounds for the lot,' murmured Mr. Wardlaw to himself; 'I must give it and she must take it.'

'But indeed, Nelly,' cried Mrs. Wardlaw, 'you are much mistaken. I really want to possess your pictures; they are far more valuable in my eyes than the things John buys at the London sales, painted by the greatest masters. What do I care about a tall street, and a straight stream, without a tree to be seen near it—'

'She means my Canalettis,' groaned her husband; 'I've got 1,500*l.* worth of 'em—go on.'

'I say, what do I care about those hideous pictures of out-of-the-way places, by a foreigneering artist, compared with these bright sketches of scenes that I know, by a hand that I love? I protest, Nelly, that these half-dozen little pictures of yours give me a greater pleasure than all the grand collection that we have got at home. And since this is so, why shouldn't John make me a present of the whole of them? They will give me more satisfaction than any diamond ring he can buy me, and will not cost half the price.'

Upon this there commenced a Dutch auction of the works in question; Mr. Wardlaw or his wife proposing some preposterous bid, and Nelly insisting on a much smaller and more reasonable figure.

'I don't want 'em home just now, my dear Nelly,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, when the purchases had been completed; 'I must make room for 'em as I can.'

'What you are thinking of, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, is that the absence of the sketches would leave my walls bare.'

'No, no,' cried the old merchant, 'of course you keep 'em. When I buy a pictur at the Royal Academy, do you think I get it home at once: not a bit of it, it's not the custom of the trade.'

And when I do get it home, do you think I keep it? Certainly not. I have to loan my picture to the artist who painted it. He says he wants it again for a few retouches, which means perhaps to take a copy of it for somebody else; what *he* calls a "replica"; if it was in any other line of business than the Fine Arts, I should call it a fraud. Hullo, what's the matter?"

It was the little maid with a telegram, which Nelly took from her with a white face.

'It is for *you*, Mr. Wardlaw, thank heaven,' faltered she; 'they have sent it on from your house. My nerves are unstrung; and telegrams have been so fatal of late, that I almost feared some bad news about dear mamma.'

'That is not like you to be so nervous, my darling,' said Mrs. Wardlaw soothingly. 'It is but five o'clock, and it is only natural that your mother, who feels the heat so much, should defer her return till the cool of the day. Besides, she left word she might be late. If I was to be frightened by every telegram that comes to John—I hope it isn't about those tambourines, by the by.'

Mr. Wardlaw had glanced his eye over the telegram, and then crumpled it up in his pocket. He now walked to the window and looked out, so that his back was turned to the two ladies.

'Something has gone down that ought to have gone up,' whispered Mrs. Wardlaw to Nelly, 'or something has gone up that ought to have gone down. They're always doing it, bless ye.'

'I think we had better be going,' said Mr. Wardlaw, still keeping his face averted. The change from kindly banter to gravity in his tone was very marked.

'You can go, of course, John, but I shall stay with Nelly till her mamma comes back. I am sure she will be glad of company.'

'Very good,' said Mr. Wardlaw slowly. 'Can I have a word with my wife, Nelly, before I go?'

'Then it *is* the tambourines,' murmured Mrs. Wardlaw; 'he has found out he has but one gross instead of two.' Nelly had passed into the next room, and closed the door, leaving her visitors alone together.

'Oh wife, wife! this is a dreadful business,' said Mr. Wardlaw hoarsely. 'That poor girl yonder is an orphan.'

'Good heavens, what do you mean, John? I know of course that she has lost her father.'

'And her mother too. This message comes from Raymond Pennicuck. "*Mrs. Conway has fallen down dead in a fit of apoplexy while at my father's rooms in the Albany. Your wife will go to Nelly at once, I know.*"'

CHAPTER XXVII.

FACE TO FACE.

NELLY never knew that it was owing to her own words that her mother had undertaken that visit to London which had ended so disastrously. After Raymond's departure on the preceding day, and when Mrs. Conway had somewhat recovered from her passionate despair, she had pressed her daughter for every detail of his conversation. 'Was she sure,' she asked, 'that he was himself convinced from his father's manner that the dead man had left no word of farewell: or was he only dutifully repeating Mr. Pennicuk's words without faith in their veracity?'

'I think Raymond believes, mamma, that there was no especial message from dear papa.'

'And *you*,' put in her mother quickly, 'what do *you* think?'

'I don't know what to think,' answered Nelly sadly; 'it was very unlike dear papa; he was not accustomed to use vague terms in expressing his affection; and as a dying man, he would, one would imagine, have sent some particular message.'

'You think he would have forgiven your mother?' said Mrs. Conway slowly.

'Oh, indeed, dear mamma, I was not thinking of that; at such an awful time, it is probable that his mind never dwelt on the unhappy estrangement between you. He must have wished to die in love and peace with all, and above all with you.'

'That is what I am trying to believe, Nelly. The shortest time, it is said, is sufficient for man to reconcile himself with his Maker. I read a verse once over some one's grave:—

Between the stirrup and the ground
Mercy I sought, mercy I found;

and surely even a less time should suffice for reconciliation between man and wife.'

'It should indeed, dear mother, and no doubt it was so. What I am most surprised at in poor papa's silence is that he should have said nothing of the circumstances that led to his cruel punishment; I should have thought he would have commissioned Mr. Pennicuk to explain them; to my mind they need explanation.'

'And to mine,' answered Mrs. Conway hoarsely.

'It was so contrary to dear papa's character,' continued Nelly, preferring to dwell even on so sad a topic rather than on the more distressing one of the alienation between her parents, 'to commit any outrage upon people's feelings, let them be who they

might; not to mention the risk he must have been conscious of incurring; and he was not one to run foolish risks.'

'Not of that sort,' answered her mother thoughtfully. 'Your good sense goes all the way with my own convictions. Ralph Pennicuick is lying to us—that is certain. He has some selfish reason, some wicked motive, for keeping us in the dark.'

'Nay, nay, dear mamma, I can no longer follow you,' remonstrated Nelly. 'What possible motive can Mr. Pennicuick have in depriving us of the melancholy satisfaction of hearing the last of my poor father? Because we are miserable, we have no right to discard both reason and charity. Indeed you are doing Mr. Pennicuick wrong.'

'You are speaking to one who knows him,' said her mother bitterly, and with a preoccupied air. Her head, heavy with thought, was leaning on her hand; she looked like one without a future, and whose weary brain, o'erladen with vain regrets, searches the past in vain for one bright spot whereon to linger.

'Nay, since you are so very hard upon Mr. Pennicuick, mamma, I must tell you something to his credit. He has made a certain offer—you will probably refuse it—but it is due to him that it should not be rejected ungraciously.'

'An offer? What sort of an offer? Has it anything to do with Raymond?'

'Nothing at all, mamma,' answered the girl firmly, though the red rose in her cheek. 'It is a proposition entirely of his own, and I must say a generous one.'

'Generous? and from Ralph Pennicuick? that is impossible! We have good authority for believing that grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles.'

'Indeed, mamma, if I may say so, the same authority has taught us to impute no evil—and especially where only good can be intended. Mr. Pennicuick has offered—and I must add in a very delicate way—to allow us three hundred pounds a year.'

'What!' Mrs. Conway rose from her chair with a quickness of which her stout frame would have seemed incapable, and stared incredulously in her daughter's face.

'There was only one stipulation, mamma,' continued Nelly; 'that there should be "no thanks."'

'That means that he does not wish to see us,' said Mrs. Conway.

'So much we already know, dear mother; and indeed, if he is ill, as Raymond tells us, that is intelligible enough. The offer, however, is certainly a genuine one and must be suitably acknowledged. I am sorry I spoke of it just at present, but you seemed anxious that I should tell you all that passed.'

‘Quite right, quite right, Nelly—and now let us talk of something else.’

There was very little talk, however, between them; Mrs. Conway’s manner was thoughtful and abstracted, and she retired earlier than was her wont, on the plea of fatigue. She had not quitted her room the next morning when Nelly went into the town, and her surprise was great indeed on her return to find that her mother had left the house for London.

That livelong night no sleep had visited Mrs. Conway’s pillow. She did not even attempt to sleep. It was only a portion of her life, so far as her mere existence was concerned. Her thoughts, her heart, her soul were fixed upon the Past; and not even upon her own Past. The question that presented itself again and again to her was, What had happened to her husband?

The offer of the allowance from Ralph Pennicuck had re-awakened all her suspicions, all her fears—though without rekindling a single hope. What could have induced a man so mean—except where his own pleasures or vices were concerned—to have made such a proposal? That it was no tenderness for the memory of his friend, she felt well assured. It must be some miserable attempt at compensation—at neutralisation of the stings of conscience. The ghost of her dead husband seemed to stand beside her, whispering, ‘Foul play, foul play.’ Even the morning light had no power to exorcise it. The question that had importuned her when she lay down in her bed was reiterated still when she arose from it, ‘What did in truth happen to my husband?’ There was only one man in England—and as she imagined in the world—who could answer it for her; and that man was Ralph Pennicuck. To him therefore she resolved to go.

Mrs. Conway, though she had so long been poor, was unaccustomed to the independent ways which are common among persons of scanty income. She was not used to travel, nor of late years to go indeed anywhere, alone. Even the short railway journey to Waterloo Station would under ordinary circumstances have been quite an ordeal to her, and it flurried her now notwithstanding the importance of the matter that occupied her thoughts. Then there was the cab from Waterloo to ‘the Albany,’ and when she got there the doubt as to how to enter that mysterious, though fashionable, establishment. All these things agitated the poor lady, as small things agitate the rest of us when we are ill and weak and helpless, and rendered her especially unfit for the interview on which she had set her mind.

A more unfit antagonist to deal with ‘Steel’ Pennicuck upon a matter in which it was necessary that he should hold his own,

could hardly be imagined. The widow, however, was not afraid of him. She was too full of suspicion and anger to feel fear. Dame Partlet, the hen, who has lost her mate and has suspicion that Reynard knows what has become of him, will flutter up against his sharp nose and glittering teeth with reckless importunity.

The Albany porter was rather puzzled by Mrs. Conway's appearance. He had general directions about the admission of ladies, none of which seemed quite to apply to her particular case. She was neither young nor pretty; she did not look like a dun, though, on the other hand, he was not sure that she was a lady; however, Mr. Pennicuick had a janitor of his own, and he left him to decide upon the advisability of admitting her to his master's presence.

'Letter X, mum, first floor,' was all he thought it necessary to say to her.

On arriving at Letter X, Mrs. Conway, had she been acquainted with the usages of the place, would have gone away and deferred her errand for a better opportunity, for the outer door was closed; but, not being aware that this meant 'not at home,' she used the knocker sharply, which at once produced Mr. Hatton.

'Mr. Pennicuick is not at home, Mrs. Conway,' said he blandly.

'That is not true,' said she (for the porter had told her otherwise), 'and I mean to see him.'

If this audacious visitor had been quite outside the 'oak,' perhaps the valet would have ventured to close it, even in her face; but she had already crossed the threshold, and he could hardly push the poor lady out.

'Please to wait here, madam, one moment.'

It was his loyal intention to give his master the chance of flying to his bedroom, from whence escape was possible by another door, for he was a fox whose earth had more than one outlet; but the widow was too quick for him. Ere he could give his warning, Ralph Pennicuick caught sight of the woman's face which of all others he most feared to see glowering behind his valet's shoulder.

'Dear Mrs. Conway, this is most unexpected. Hatton, you may leave us,' added he quickly; for there was that in his visitor's eye which presaged a stormy scene, and a scene before a servant is unendurable.

He held out his hand, but the widow waved it away with an impatient gesture, nor would she even take the chair which he pushed forward for her accommodation; she stood with one shaking hand upon the back of it, and the other pointing at him, while her white lips strove to articulate in vain.

'You are angry with me, I perceive, Mrs. Conway,' said Penni-

quick in conciliatory tones, 'though I have knowingly done nothing to arouse your anger. If it seems strange that I have not visited you, mere physical inability to do so must be my excuse. I sent my son to explain to you——'

'Ralph Pennicuick,' interrupted Mrs. Conway hoarsely, 'I am come here to know the truth.'

'The truth, my dear madam?'

'Yes, the truth about my husband.'

Pennicuick's swarthy face, pale with fear and hate and care, quailed before her searching glance, but he answered calmly enough:

'What Raymond has told you he heard from my own lips. I can only repeat——'

'That is why I disbelieve it,' broke in the other vehemently. 'It is your lips that I mistrust, because they are used to lying. Did they not lie to *him* when he was alive? What, do you suppose I have forgotten when your Raymond was but a few months old, and I a second mother to him, and my husband your best friend, how you set all those sacred ties at naught, and dared to offer me your love?'

'That was a long time ago, my dear madam,' answered Pennicuick, with a harsh laugh.

'It was so, but I have not forgotten it. The nature of the man who could so outrage friendship and the memory of the dead has never altered; now as then, there is no sacrifice of others—even of your own son—which you would hesitate to make, to gratify one selfish pleasure.'

'You are severe, madam; I admit that you were a very dragon of virtue, and I—well, anything you please—but there is a statute of limitations for offences committed a lifetime ago, and as in this case nothing came of it——'

'That is false! Everything came of it. It cost me my husband's love.'

'You never told him?'

'No, or you would not have been alive to ask the question, but the horror (the cause of which I might not tell) with which I saw his friendship for you, bred quarrels between us, and, thanks to you, the breach grew so wide that love could not recross it. It was you that separated us and you that kept us asunder.'

'Indeed, madam, you overrate my influence. Of course I was not pleased at the contempt—merited, I will confess—with which you treated my devotion; but as to your domestic differences, I think they can be otherwise accounted for.'

'I was to blame,' said Mrs. Conway gravely; 'I was much to

blame ; though, if you had not come between us, matters would not have been so bad. I was hard and bitter and cold, though Heaven knows that through it all I loved him. I read your sneer, " You hid it well, madam," but it is true, and you shall find it so. If I proved it not while he lived, I will prove it now. If he never knew it in this world, he shall know it in heaven, if spirits have any cognisance of things on earth. I will devote myself henceforth to redress his wrongs.'

'Your grief has weakened your judgment, Mrs. Conway,' observed Ralph Pennicuick quietly. 'That your husband has met with a most cruel fate is true—so cruel, that, to spare you, I have sealed my lips concerning it.'

'I spoke of wrongs, broke in the other harshly ; 'falsehood, where we have a right to look for truth ; treachery, where loyalty should be ; betrayal of trust—ah, you have betrayed him !'

Her words, swift as lightning, seemed to blast their object ; Ralph Pennicuick literally shrank before them and grew deadly pale, though he still faced the speaker with his eyes, the expression of which was firm and venomous.

'Who says I have betrayed him ?' inquired he hoarsely.

'Your face,' answered she quietly, 'which speaks truth, and gives the lie to your tongue. I was sure it was so all along, but now I am doubly sure.'

Her passion was frightful to witness ; her large frame trembled and quivered ; her face was purple ; her eyes, always prominent, seemed to leap at him from their sockets.

'Do you suppose,' she went on, 'that I was deceived by your lying telegram ? that I did not know Arthur Conway better than to believe him capable of the offence you imputed to him ? He was not one to defile temples and break down images : or to risk, for a mere whim, a life that was precious to another. You alone, Ralph Pennicuick, were with him ; you alone know how and why he met his death.'

'You know all that I know, madam,' answered Pennicuick sullenly. 'I was in Shanghae, doing my best to save him, when he perished. The matter does not rest upon my testimony : two English officers accompanied me to the scene of his execution.'

'Is that the way an innocent man defends himself ?' cried Mrs. Conway. '"If you don't believe me, there are two others—credible witnesses." Every word you speak is a confession of your guilt.'

'I do not understand you, madam,' said Pennicuick.

'Then I will speak plainer. I see there has been foul play. I suspect the worst of you. He never committed the offence for which he suffered. It was you who committed it. What, what !

have I found you out? Murderer, murderer!' She threw up her hands and fell forward on the floor with a heavy thud.

Pennicuick did not move; it seemed as though her last words had turned him into stone; he stood and stared at the prostrate woman without an effort to assist her, without an attempt to summon others to her assistance, though he was dimly aware of the presence of Hatton on the other side of the door.

Mrs. Conway's voice had been raised loud enough to summon him from a much greater distance than the servants' room he occupied, and most persons would have answered a cry which must have sounded very like 'Murder!' but Mr. Hatton's characteristic was discretion.

At last, seeing that his visitor still lay without motion at his feet, Ralph Pennicuick, moved by a new terror, pulled the bell-rope furiously, which at once summoned the valet.

'Something has happened to Mrs. Conway; an apoplectic fit as I should imagine; send the porter for Dr. Green, and return to me immediately.'

His mind had recovered from the rude shock of Mrs. Conway's vehement accusation, and was getting into its usual excellent working order. At the same time he felt like one in front of a battery that has 'got the range,' and whose only hope lies in its ammunition being exhausted. If Mrs. Conway had drawn her last breath he would be safe, but otherwise the rancour of her tongue would pursue him everywhere. The shaft she had shot at a venture appeared to him to have had a definite aim; for though, in her hate and rage, her suspicions had far outstripped the truth, there had been moments when he had actually accused himself of his friend's death, and the word 'murderer' had scarcely seemed misplaced to him. It was no time for such morbid and remorseful feelings now; it behoved him to stand upon his guard against a charge, less serious indeed, but by no means fanciful or groundless. This woman, lying dead or alive before him, had seized the very weapon used by his conscience, the barb of which he was ever striving to pluck out from his own bosom. She had called him Betrayer of Trust; it was true there was no proof of that, nor ever would be; but the knowledge that another person beside himself had become possessed of this fact—though it was only by intuition—would be intolerable.

To know oneself to be a scoundrel is one of the bitterest fruits of the tree of knowledge, yet not so bitter as to know another knows it, and 'another' in this case Ralph Pennicuick felt but too sure meant all who had a right to know it. Reckless of consequences, as deaf to menace as to reason, this woman would proclaim his

infamy upon the housetops, and as confidently as though she possessed the proofs of it, as long as she lived. But would she live even to repeat her accusation once? He leant over the prostrate body and regarded it attentively, taking care, however, not to disturb a limb. He foresaw that, if matters were as he hoped, there must be an inquest; and though to no mortal eye could he seem to have any interest in the woman's death, yet it was well to be on the safe side. It struck him that it might have been better perhaps, if it were apoplexy, to raise her head, but he let it lie (the purple face staring upwards with apathetic eyes); not that he wished to kill her (though he wished her dead), but simply that none should say he had had any hand in the matter.

She lay quite still, nor, so far from the stertorous breathing that he had understood took place under such circumstances, could he discern she breathed at all. It was indeed a sorry sight, and had he been quite sure that all was over, it might have aroused his pity. The contrast between what lay before him and the recollection of what she had been years ago, when he had thought it worth while to have run risks to win her, might in that case have struck him; but, as it was, the desire of self-preservation overpowered all other feelings and obliterated them. He kept his place, like a sentinel on guard, till his valet reappeared. 'This is a sad business, Hatton,' said he. 'I am afraid of doing anything till the doctor comes for fear it should do more harm than good.'

'That is the safest plan, sir. I noticed the poor lady was very excited when I let her in—or rather, when she let herself in—for she would take no denial.'

'It was natural that she should wish to see me,' answered the other quietly.

Then master and man both stood on guard—revolving their own thoughts—till the doctor came, who, stooping down, busied himself for a few seconds with his lancet, and then rose, shaking his head in the manner with which we are most of us, alas! acquainted, and which thus appeared in the reports of certain subsequent proceedings, 'Dr. Green at once pronounced life to be extinct.'

This gentleman was an eminent physician living hard by in Piccadilly, and professionally known to Mr. Pennicuick.

'How did this sad business come about?' inquired he.

'It was from intense excitement I believe, doctor. It is Mrs. Conway, wife of the poor fellow who was killed when travelling with me in China, and she came here insisting upon having the whole particulars. I had avoided her for that very reason—for they were of a nature to shock any woman; but she compelled me to be explicit, and this, alas! is the result.'

'I am not surprised at it,' answered the doctor gravely. 'There was a strong predisposition to apoplexy, no doubt, and any sudden shock, especially if she was excited, must have been dangerous to her.'

'She was intensely excited,' reiterated Pennicuick; 'Hatton there remarked it even before she entered the room. When I spoke of what had happened to her husband, she cried out, speaking of the Chinese who had put him so barbarously to death, "Murderers! murderers!" and then fell down upon the floor just as you found her.'

'I heard the lady cry out them very words,' put in Hatton respectfully.

'The whole affair is clear as daylight,' observed Dr. Green; 'but it will be necessary to inform the coroner. I am very sorry to inconvenience you,' he added, seeing the clouds gather on Pennicuick's face, 'but an inquest is indispensable.'

'Do not speak of inconvenience, doctor. I will go to some hotel for the present—perhaps Hatchett's.'

'There is no reason why the poor lady should not be taken home.'

'There is only a daughter left; the shock would be too terrible. No, it had better remain here. Let everything be done, Hatton, that should be done.'

'And about Miss Conway, sir? had not Mr. Raymond better be communicated with?'

'Why?' The question was short and sharp; but immediately his voice altered to a gentler tone. 'Yes, you are right; I will go to him myself, and he will arrange matters, at least if I can be spared,' continued he, looking inquiringly at the doctor.

'You can be of no sort of use here,' answered that gentleman. 'If you take my advice, you will at once remove to Hatchett's. Town is very full, and the sooner you secure rooms—and especially the sooner you leave *these* rooms—the better.'

Ralph Pennicuick took the hint and his hat, and left at once.

'Your master is not looking well,' said the doctor to the valet.

'He is far from well, sir; he has been very nervous and out of sorts ever since he came home from China. Captain Conway's death has shaken him a great deal, I think.'

'Ah! And this is not a nice sort of thing to happen to a man in his state. You must stay here, and I will send some people to look after matters.'

Mr. Hatton did not care to stay by himself where he was, but followed the doctor out, and remained outside the door of the apartment until the 'people' alluded to arrived. The whole

occurrence was distasteful to him ; he had not contemplated being asked to remain with corpses when he entered upon his situation ; but, on the other hand, he felt that the bond between himself and his master had been somehow strengthened by this unpleasant event. He was conscious that he had been discreet, and that his discretion had not escaped Ralph Pennicuick's observation. Very few things that concerned that gentleman did

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

THOUGH poor Nelly's home was left desolate on that terrible day, it was not deserted. Mrs. Wardlaw left her home and the husband from whom she had never been separated for a quarter of a century, to take up her quarters for the night with the orphaned girl.

'You have got a mother yet, my darling,' she whispered fondly in her ear, 'if you would only let it be so.'

But for the time Nelly was hardly sensible of her kindness. She had lost father, mother, and all that belonged to her, and seemed to herself utterly alone in the world. If Raymond had been her accepted lover, and could have come down in person to give his loving sympathy, it would just then have hardly availed her, though the consciousness that he was hers would without doubt have been an unspeakable comfort ; but, as it was, it was forbidden her even to think of him. There was no green spot in all the desert of Life that lay before her on which to fix her eyes. She was unhappy before, and full of apprehension for the future, but far worse had befallen her than she had dreamed of. 'I was not in safety, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came,' were the words of Scripture that seemed to her to have the most proper application to herself ; its promises and recommendations to be of good cheer, were not for her. Even the excellent woman who had come to sustain her in her tribulation failed in her errand of mercy. There was no faculty of consolation in her ; for sympathy—except so far as pity and kindness went—was wanting. She had never so much as seen Captain Conway, and only knew of him as a man who had been estranged from his family, partly by his own act ; it was impossible for her to understand the bond that, stretching across the globe, had united father and daughter of late years so nearly. Her knowledge of Mrs. Conway had been more personal, but it had only made her acquainted with the poor woman's faults and follies ; and Nelly could not but be aware of this. She had herself been acquainted with them, but also with

the love and tenderness that lay at the root of her mother's character, and which were hidden from Mrs. Wardlaw as from the rest of the world, and she resented the fact that this kind friend had been, although by necessity, thus ignorant of her mother's virtues. How could she understand the greatness of her sorrow, who did not understand the greatness of her loss? Nelly was very sensible, however, of her good intentions, nor did her common sense so far desert her in her wretchedness as to cause her to fail to recognise the rarity as well as the value of such a friendship. Words of gratitude, steeped in tears, were not wanting to her, and she did also what she could in the shape of acknowledgment by giving way to her friend's wishes in various material particulars. If she had had her own way, she would have gone up to town at once, and kept companionship with all that remained of her poor mother till it was committed to the grave; but she suffered herself to be overruled in this particular.

'You surely believe me, Nelly,' Mrs. Wardlaw had reasoned, 'when I say that your dear mother is dead, and can derive no possible solace from your presence.'

'I know you got the telegram—but,' added she with sad significance, 'one cannot always believe telegrams.'

'My darling, Raymond has been,' returned the other softly. 'He followed his message to our house in person; only he told my husband not to tell you unless you inquired; he is not one of those to parade his kindness, and, besides, it really seems as though——'

'I understand,' put in Nelly gravely. 'What did he tell Mr. Wardlaw? Let me know all.'

'Well, darling, he told him enough to make me sure that it would only shock you to—to do what you propose. It is better to remember your poor mother as you saw her last.'

There was a long pause, during which Nelly shed those tears whose silent flow is deeper and more sad than the wildest bursts of grief.

'Raymond saw her, darling, and everything—the little that now can be done—has been done just as though you had been there yourself. It may be necessary, but he hopes not, that you should be at the inquest.' Here Nelly had been unable to repress a shudder. 'There must be one, it seems, though Dr. Green, who saw your poor mother within a few minutes of her seizure, pronounced it, for certain, apoplexy.'

'Where—where is she?'

'At the Albany, at Mr. Pennicuck's chambers. That is what makes it so impossible that you should go, even if there were not

other reasons. He has gone himself to some hotel ; but the place will be given up to the officials—the jury and that—and afterwards she will be brought to Richmond. John will make arrangements. Pray be reasonable, darling.’

So Nelly consented, and never saw her dead mother’s face—just as it had happened with her in the case of her father. There is much painfulness in such farewells, but also a melancholy satisfaction, and to forego it, was, in Nelly’s case, an act of self-denial. It is a test (though a rough one, and by no means without exceptions) of the genuineness of our love, when we wish to take such sad leave-takings in person, and not to have our dead put out of sight—and, too often, out of mind—as quickly as may be.

On another point, also, Nelly felt herself constrained to give way to her good friend’s arguments. If her own ideas had been consulted, she would have preferred to dwell alone in her present habitation, at all events for a little, albeit her bereavement had robbed it of all the attributes of home. But Mrs. Wardlaw had put it to her John, that it would never have done to let the dear girl ‘eat her heart out with thinking of them as she had lost’ in that death-stricken abode, and she contrived to rescue her from that fate by help of arguments borrowed from the Proprieties.

‘I care nothing for what people think of my staying here alone,’ Nelly had said, not audaciously, but from that callous indifference to the opinion of ‘people’ which always accompanies genuine woe.

‘But your poor dear mother would have cared for it *for* you, Nelly, under such circumstances. I am sure, if she can look down from heaven and see you now, she would say, “Make Coromandel House your home, my darling, until you find yourself better suited somewhere else.”’

A remark the sublunary tone of which could only be attributed to the very recent arrival of its supposed utterer in the Celestial Regions ; but Nelly understood what was meant, and, urged also by the wish to gratify her friend, was moved to take up for the present her quarters with the Wardlaws.

There, in seclusion of course from all save her host and hostess, and with a sense of loneliness and isolation beyond the power of words to tell, she remained for some time, save for a few hours of painful publicity. It was found necessary, after all, that she should give evidence at the inquest. She pleaded against it as some half-blinded creature might have implored not to be dragged into the glare of noon, but declined to take advantage of a doctor’s certificate to excuse herself. It could easily and with propriety have been obtained, for she was very far from well ; but she had

been given to understand that to absent herself would be to evade a public duty. This information she had received, strange to say, in a note from Mr. Pennicuick, marked 'Private and confidential,' the contents of which she had therefore kept to herself; but there is no reason why my readers should exercise a similar delicacy.

— My dear Miss Conway,—In spite of my utmost efforts to save you from attending the sad formality that must needs take place on Wednesday, it seems your presence can hardly be dispensed with. To learn that any act is a duty is, I know, in your case, to secure its performance: but over and above that consideration I think there is a peculiar propriety in your making this sacrifice. You and I are well aware that it was your mother's excessive sensitiveness and sorrow for your father's loss, acting upon a system already debilitated and little fitted to sustain so terrible a shock, that has been the cause of her decease; but it is just possible that some question may be put embarrassing to a mere friend (however devoted) like myself, but easily answered, and with much greater weight of authority, by yourself. Your poor mother's prejudices were strong—she was easily angered and somewhat difficult to conciliate—but we know how loyal and loving was her heart. It seems to me that no hint of what was after all a constitutional weakness should be allowed to leak out in a mere formal inquiry such as this, and your presence would prevent it, or nip it in the bud. I hope I have made my meaning clear: but at all events I am quite certain, my dear Miss Conway, you will not misunderstand my motives. For the present I write nothing more, for I feel the subject of my note is too grave and sad to admit of the companionship of another topic.

Your very sincere friend,

RALPH PENNICUICK.

Mr. Pennicuick's meaning was quite clear to Nelly, and she understood even his motives better than he imagined. She did not dislike him as Mrs. Conway had done, but she could not give him credit for unselfishness. That paragraph about her mother's 'prejudices' had reference, she was persuaded, to the feelings she had entertained towards himself; and the 'hint' of which he spoke in all probability was an allusion to the enmity between them. She was, however, as anxious as himself that no record of weakness should sully her mother's memory; and moreover it appeared her duty that she should do his bidding, and so she wrote him a few words of acquiescence. It did not seem strange to her, under the circumstances, that he had not, as usual, made Raymond his messenger, but other facts corroborated her view of the object of his communication. Perhaps, if she had been less nearly interested in its proceedings, the inquest would have been an ordeal even more severe than it proved to be. As it was, her thoughts were too much wrapped up in the Dead to admit of her being disturbed by minor matters, and moreover she was spared as much as possible in consideration of her position.

One jurymen, indeed—there is always one such individual

among the twelve—did put some searching questions to her as respected Mr. Pennicuick, which arose from the circumstance that the notion had found its way into his head that that gentleman had murdered the deceased.

‘Were Mr. Pennicuick and your mamma upon good terms,’ he had inquired, ‘at the time when she called at the Albany?’

‘They had not met for nearly a year, in consequence of Mr. Pennicuick’s absence abroad,’ she had replied; ‘but he was my father’s most intimate friend, and had just made a proposition through a third person, which testified to his good feeling towards her.’

‘Your mamma had no pecuniary claim upon him of any kind?’ persisted the juror.

‘None whatever,’ answered Nelly emphatically, and not without a sense of recognition, in her very emphasis, of the generosity of the offer she had in her mind.

‘I think there is no need to pursue our inquiries in that direction,’ the coroner had observed, and so the matter had dropped. She was unaware at the time that Mr. Pennicuick himself had already suffered from that hostile and suspicious juror, though she guessed something of it from what she read in subsequent reports of the proceedings. Mr. Pennicuick had schemed in vain to get Nelly examined first, and, failing in that, had given his own evidence with characteristic clearness: perhaps the juror had thought him too clear, and at once built up an hypothesis of murder, and then clung to his hobbyhorse, in a manner which, if it could be practised with real horses, would ensure a man’s never being thrown.

‘You say the object of the deceased’s visit to your chambers, Mr. Pennicuick, was to receive from you an account of her late husband’s death. Why had you withheld this from her?’

‘I had not withheld it; I had communicated the particulars to her through my son Raymond, but it seems she wished to have them from my own lips.’

‘She was not satisfied, then, with your version of the matter?’

‘On the contrary, she desired to have my version without those alterations which, I suppose, belong to every narrative when it passes through fresh hands.’

‘Your interview, however, seems to have been a somewhat stormy one?’

‘It was so; through the natural excitement with which Mrs. Conway received the recital of her husband’s fate, and of the atrocities that were committed upon him.’

‘You had no sort of advantage to derive, of course, from the death of the deceased lady?’

‘Advantage! Good heavens, no! What benefit could it have been to me?’

This was a little indiscreet. The Scriptural precept of confining our remarks to ‘Yea, yea,’ and ‘Nay, nay,’ has its best exemplification in the witness-box. Whatever goes beyond this, contains the element of danger. The reply ‘Certainly not’ would have satisfied the juror; but, as it was, an opportunity was afforded him of pursuing his investigations.

‘Well, it would have been a benefit to you if she was an annuitant upon your estate, for example; we are to understand, however, that she had no sort of claim upon you?’

Ralph Pennicuick hesitated. If the question could have been foreseen, he would have replied to it with the promptest brevity, but he had only made provision against inquiries respecting his social relations with Mrs. Conway: he had not thought it possible that allusion would be made to pecuniary matters between them, and for the moment it fairly staggered him. The claim about which he was thus interrogated had been for weeks the chief topic of his waking thoughts, as of his feverish dreams, but that only made this sudden reference to it from so unexpected a quarter the more startling. It was as a blow on an open wound. He knew that he was changing colour, and was even conscious of a faint trembling in his limbs, as he replied at last, and not before his silence had excited curiosity:

‘Mrs. Conway had no sort of claim upon me whatever.’

The answer was decisive enough; yet, as we have seen, Nelly was called upon to corroborate it.

The circumstance made but little impression upon her at the time; her heart was too full for that; and the sad ceremony at Richmond, which immediately succeeded the official proceedings, helped to blot it from her remembrance. Raymond of course attended the funeral, but she was only dimly conscious of the fact. Through the darkness of that day she felt rather than saw certain gleams of light. Her host and hostess were standing by her, and would stand by her, she knew, in other trials to come; and there was another presence equally faithful and more tender, but studiously undemonstrative and unassuming, and which she knew it behoved her not to recognise at such a time, even though all her nature yearned for sympathy and her heart was weary within her. She could not trust herself even to press Raymond’s hand. As to his father, she was not even aware, until afterwards informed of the fact, that he had not been present at the funeral.

(To be continued.)

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

IV. *ARIOSTO*.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

PETRARCH and Boccaccio died, as has been seen, almost within a year of each other at the beginning of the last quarter of the fourteenth century. And we have to travel over a space of as nearly as possible one hundred years before we come to another name in the list of Italian Poets which merits mention elsewhere than in those wonderful lengthy catalogues which Quadrio and Crescimbeni, the historians of Italian poetry, have compiled with such untiring industry and perseverance. We pass by the forgotten names of dozens of lyric rhymesters, who tagged sonnets to their mistresses' eyebrows with a dulness where decency was frigid and warmth indecent, and scores of romanticists, who almost invariably took for their subjects the stock heroes of chivalry, and whose monstrous inventions resemble nothing so much as the nightmare creations of indigestion-begotten dreams, till at last, just as the century since the muse veiled her face at the death of her favourite on the Tuscan hill above the Elsa was completed, we come upon the name of Ariosto, who was born in 1474.

It was a very different world—that into which Messer Ludovico Ariosto was born—from that which Giovanni the son of Boccaccio had quitted. The sap which was to produce the bloom of the renaissance was just rising after the long winter deadness, at the former time. The blossom was out on every tree, and making every part of earth's surface gay with colour, at the latter period. And the author of the 'Orlando Furioso' had the good fortune to be born in what was at that moment perhaps the most favourable spot in all Italy for securing all the advantages of the new time.

Lying low among the swamps and rice grounds of the lower valley of the Po, a rich but unlovely and scarcely quite healthy district, the traveller from Padua 'the learned' to Bologna 'the fat' comes upon the ancient city of Ferrara. For nearly five hundred years, from shortly after the beginning of the twelfth century to nearly the end of the sixteenth, Ferrara was governed by a series of rulers of the House of Este—first as heads of a Republic; then as Vicars for the Pontiffs; then as independent Sovereign Dukes;

till in the year 1597, when Alphonso died, leaving no direct heir, the Roman See, then governed by Clement VIII., set aside by high-handed violence the will of Alphonso, which appointed his cousin Cesare his successor in the Duchy, and Ferrara became thenceforward a part of the Papal dominions, till the revolution accomplished the other day. The sovereigns of the House of Este were on the whole, and as the time went, good and beneficent rulers—more so, at all events, than almost any other of the Princes of Italy. And Ferrara, their capital, prospered under their rule, and was the residence of a brilliant Court, ornamented at various periods of its existence by the presence of men, the remembrance of whom will never permit its story to fall into oblivion.

But from the death of Alphonso in 1597 all was changed; and Ferrara, as the passing traveller—for none now stays there!—sees it, is the result of, and an eloquent commentary upon, sacerdotal government. The place seems to have been smitten by the numbing hand of paralysis. There are the huge palaces built from the rents of those too fat and teeming plains which lie around the city. But they are silent, *morne*, and ghost-like. In many of them rough boards supply the places of windows which the heir either impoverished or at all events, thinking that he can spend his money elsewhere better than at Ferrara, will not repair. There are the enormous hollowly resounding churches, once filled to overflowing by the crowds who flocked to hear preachers celebrated in their day. There are the vast desert spaces, large enough for thousands of troops to manœuvre in them, uselessly enclosed by the enormous circuit of the crumbling city walls, a world too wide for the shrunken life within them. There are the large, silent grass-grown streets, where solitude is emphasized perhaps by a crippled beggar basking in the sun, or a wandering gaunt dog slouching along under the wall. And there concentrated in the streets immediately surrounding the old palace of the Dukes and the neighbouring cathedral, which form the heart of the city, is the population, squalid, beggarly, sordid, ragged, and dirty to a degree equalled only by the towns of the far South. Never was there a place which spoke so plainly and so loudly the tale of decadence. Even the physical conditions of the district have been suffered to become gravely deteriorated. For the fatal system of building up ever higher from generation to generation the dykes which prevent the Po from inundating the whole district, instead of dredging the silt ever accumulating and raising the bed of the river to a higher level, has at length caused the stream to flow in an artificial channel raised above the adjoining country, to such an extent that the tops of the church towers of Ferrara, at a distance of some

three or four miles from the southern bank of the Po, are lower than the surface of the water in the river when it is at flood.

Such is Ferrara at the present day. But changed as it is, as regards the dull life that still pulses feebly within its walls, it is in its outward and visible form sufficiently unchanged for us to be able very readily to imagine what it was when Ludovico Ariosto walked its streets at the end of the fifteenth century. He was born in 1474, as has been said, not at Ferrara, to the chagrin of the Ferrarese chroniclers and biographers, but at the neighbouring city of Reggio, of which his mother, the noble dame Doria Malaguzzi, was a native, and his father, the Ferrarese patrician Niccolò Ariosto, was Governor for Duke Hercules the First. At a very early age, however, he was brought to Ferrara, and there received not only his earliest but his subsequent education. For it cannot be true, as some of his biographers have said, that he was sent to the University of Padua, inasmuch as Duke Hercules, by a law made in 1485, forbade any subject of his to study at any university save his own at Ferrara!—by which it is seen what a provident and patriotic prince was Duke Hercules!

The young Ludovico, we learn, was a very precocious lad, and an indefatigable student. His first literary attempt was a dramatic rendering of the fable of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in Italian verse. It has not been recorded exactly at what age this work was produced, further than that it was in his childhood. And we are told that whenever his father and mother left the house, he would seize the opportunity of ransacking the wardrobes for the purpose of dressing up his four younger brothers and five younger sisters with aught that he could find there with a view to the theatrical performance of his drama.

Once again in the case of this predestined poet, as in so many a subsequent one, the marking of him by the Muses for their own proved too strong for parental wishes and ambitions. The old Governor thought, rightly enough no doubt, that the surest path to high and profitable employment under his sovereign was the study of the law. And for five years—from his fifteenth in 1489 to his twentieth in 1494—Ludovico attempted with more or less of earnest endeavour and utter want of success to make himself learned in the law. But it was of no use; and Niccolò Ariosto seems to have been more easily convinced than some other fathers that '*Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret,*' and that it was useless to continue the attempt to make a lawyer out of a born poet. For at the end of the five years no further opposition was made to the young Ludovico's pursuit of the career to which his own inclinations and instincts impelled him.

Perhaps this conviction of the uselessness of further opposition to his son's wishes was completed by a little domestic incident which occurred just about the end of the above-mentioned five years. Ludovico had incurred his father's displeasure on some ground or other, from a mistake of the facts of the case on the part of the senior, as the sequel of the story shows, and was summoned to the paternal presence to receive a lecture, which was administered with much severity of tone and manner, and at considerable length. The young man listened to it with the most marked attention, and without the smallest attempt to interrupt the flow of the parental eloquence or to exculpate himself; and when the old Governor had at length made an end, he went off, leaving his apparently penitent son deeply impressed and meditating on the lesson that had been given him. And he was still immersed in the thoughts which his father had with no little self-complacency perceived that he had awakened in his mind, when one of his brothers joined him.

'How was it,' asked the sympathising younger brother, 'that you got into such a scrape, and made our father so angry?'

'Pooh!' quoth the lectured and still thoughtful lad; 'I did nothing of the kind. I was never near the place!'

'Good heavens!' returned the younger, 'why did you not tell him so at once? He would have seen directly that it was all a mistake!'

'Ay! But that would have spoiled everything! The fact is, Gabriello' (that was the brother's name), 'that I have an angry father in my new play, and I was just in want of exactly such a jobation as I have been listening to. I would not have interrupted it for the world! It was just the very thing! And papa did it excellently well! I must run and write it down while it is in my head!'

The play in question was the '*Cassaria*,' Ariosto's earliest published work; and there, in the scolding given to Eropilo by his father, may be found, preserved like a fly in amber, the old Governor's discourse.

The first occasion, however, on which the young poet appeared in public before his fellow-townsmen was more quaintly characteristic of the ways and manners of that not very reverential time than of the man himself. He was about twenty at the time, and cannot, therefore, despite the wonder and admiration of his contemporaries, be compared, in point of precocity of intellect, with our Abraham Cowley, who, making his first attempt at ten years old on '*Pyramus and Thisbe*,' as Ariosto before him had done, had at twelve written verse which the contemporary world

admired and eagerly read! The first performance offered to the public by Ludovico, almost, as it would seem, immediately after his father had consented to his following the bent of his own genius, was an oration in Latin hexameters on the praises of philosophy, which was recited before a large and applauding audience *in the Cathedral*! Think of the outcry that would be raised by the ecclesiastics of the present day against such a sacrilegious outrage on all the proprieties of the place and its associations! Neither layman nor clerk dreamed of any impropriety in permitting the young student to use the cathedral pulpit for the pronouncing of his hexameters; and so great was the meed of applause which they won for him, that there was hardly a father in the city, we are told, who did not strive to excite the ambition of his son by pointing out to him the example of Ludovico Ariosto.

There is the huge vaulted nave, which the young scholar filled with his voice! It is very silent now, very empty, very dreary, and damp from neglect and desertion. A feeble voice may be heard from some distant corner of the edifice, perfunctorily droning the prescribed words in dreary monotone to three or four old women. And it needs a strong effort of the imagination to repeople the same scene with a richly-dressed and various-coloured crowd of all that was noblest, fairest, most learned, and most famous in Ferrara, eagerly listening to the clear young voice that was filling the church with his Pagan-modelled verses on a secular Pagan-treated theme! The contrast between that youthful and that aged voice and figure, of the youth and decrepitude,—of how many other things is it the symbol!

The old Governor died in 1500, when Ludovico was in his twenty-sixth year. And Duke Hercules lived five years longer to be succeeded by his son Alphonso in 1505. And these years, the very prime of our poet's youth, and the first of his entire emancipation from the *status pupilaris* of the parental household, were, according to all the accounts of the chroniclers, one long carnival time to the citizens of Ferrara. For Duke Hercules was a veritable Old King Cole of a sovereign. He had immense revenues besides those of the State; but he taxed his subjects heavily all the same, and, nevertheless, seems to have made himself exceedingly beloved by his people. He never hoarded his money, but spent it freely, and almost entirely among the citizens, in making his Court and capital the gayest and most splendid in Italy. It was always 'festa,' always carnival at Ferrara. 'Tournaments, races of horses, of oxen, of asses, of girls, of boys, shooting matches, and hunting parties succeeded each other without interruption.'¹ Then the

¹ Frizzi, *Hist. of Ferrara*, vol. iv., p. 217.

good Duke would sally forth o' nights, and, looking in quite unexpectedly, take pot-luck with his subjects in genuine Caliph Haroun Alraschid fashion. Neither then nor at any other time was any Court in Italy so thronged with men of learning and genius. For such, come from what nation they might, there was always a warm welcome, and assistance if they needed it. Then, again, the Court of Ferrara was a noted resort of noble knights who had differences touching their honour to put to the arbitrament of the sword. For the sport-loving Duke was always ready to afford a tilting-ground and the countenance of his august presence to champions in need of such accommodation. Many, accordingly, were the celebrated duels which came off at Ferrara, to the infinite satisfaction of the Duke and his subjects. Then as for his piety, if all the churches and monasteries he built were not enough to vouch for it, says chronicler Frizzi devoutly, it is abundantly proved by his habit of going to various churches accompanied by all his famous band, there to have Mass celebrated with all the attractions of music.

It was at this time, December 1501, that his son Alphonso became the third husband of the notorious Lucrezia Borgia, a most extraordinary match, the marvel of the making of which is eclipsed by the yet greater marvel that it turned out happily and satisfactorily to all parties concerned! Wonderful are the accounts which have been preserved of the gala-doings and festivities with which all Ferrara celebrated the coming of the bride from Rome to her new home. For months previously nothing was to be seen or heard in Ferrara but preparations for the great event; and a sum pretty nearly equal to the immense dower which the infamous Alexander VI.'s daughter brought with her from Rome must have been expended in adorning and beautifying the city, in preparing splendid processions, pageants, tournaments, and theatrical representations, and in Gargantuan cooking for colossal feasting. The ducal palace was kept open to all loyal subjects who came with anything eatable or drinkable to assist their sovereign in the coming tremendous call on his hospitality. It was counted that up to the evening of the 27th of that December 1501, fifteen thousand head of poultry, among other things, had been brought in as presents. Indeed, the zeal of the Ferrarese outran the necessity of the case, great as that was, for a few days later we find that a large quantity of game and poultry had to be thrown into the Po because it had become unfit for use.

Then at the Epiphany-tide of that year, 1502, in order to aid a little in finding the means to meet all this immense expenditure, the young prince rides forth through the city '*per la sua ventura*'—to see what luck would send him, in shape of gifts of the '*Beffana*,'

the beneficent fairy, who personates in Italian nursery mythology the Epiphany, and brings all sorts of good things to good children. To Prince Alphonso the Beffana was very generous. He got, as he went through the city accompanied by twenty-four horsemen with drums and trumpets—'di sua ventura,' as the chronicler says; for his fairing, as we should say—three hundred head of oxen, an equal number of large cheeses, upwards of a thousand couple of capons, and other things to the estimated value of a thousand ducats.

In that the Beffana was something like a good fairy in the good old times, especially when a gallant young prince sought her favour.¹

Such was the world and the scene on which the young Ludovico Ariosto was launched at twenty-six years old in the character of his own master. Though it was not till probably a couple of years later that he became officially attached to the service of the young princes of the House of Este, especially and nominally to that of the younger brother of Alphonso, the Cardinal Hippolito, though in truth they both availed themselves of his services, there can be no doubt that he was among the gay and gallant throng who rode out from Ferrara to meet Lucrezia, and that he took part in all the subsequent festivities. He was well fitted, too, at that time, to figure advantageously on such an occasion. He was tall, well-made, and active, with regular, somewhat aquiline features, and large, handsome, well-opened eyes. Most of his contemporaries speak, too, of his ready wit and pleasant conversation, and we are told that Duke Alphonso especially delighted in his companionship. Nevertheless, he does not seem to have been fashioned altogether of the clay of which courtiers are made, although he lived fifteen years or more at Court. In general conversation he was apt to be among the least talkative, and was liable to fits of absence of mind. All those who knew him, and have left us any memorial of him, agree in praising his uprightness, truthfulness, kindness of heart, and temperance of life. They commend him for the moderation of his wishes in respect to honours and distinctions, for his contentment with a moderate competency, his aversion from courtly dignities to be obtained only by servility, and enjoyed only by submission to restraint, and for the simplicity of his tastes.

The fact that our poet was the father of two illegitimate sons

¹ Some sentences of the foregoing description of Ferrarese social conditions at the outset of the sixteenth century have been taken from a sketch of the life of Olympia Morata, written by the author many years ago. That very remarkable Ferrarese figure, however, did not come upon the scene till Ariosto had left it.

was in the eyes of his contemporaries no more a blemish on the moral excellence of his life and character than the licentiousness which here and there (to a less degree, however, than in the case of almost any of his fellow-poets of that age) disfigures his writings. The one and the other peccadillo were too entirely in accordance with the universal habits and manners of the time not to be—hardly so much, one could say, condoned, as—considered as quite matters of course. The elder of these sons, Giambattista, was born, as it would seem, while the poet's father was still living, and Ludovico was an inmate of the paternal house, the mother having been a certain Maria, a servant living in the family. This Giambattista was brought up, we are told, altogether by the family of the mother. He became a soldier—and a very good one—and nothing more is heard of him save a mention in a legal document concerning a partition of property between him and his brother in 1542. The other, Virginio, was born in 1509, his mother being one Orseola, a country girl of the environs of Ferrara, who afterwards became the wife of one Antonio Cattinelli. Virginio was carefully educated by his father, who afterwards legitimatised him, and made him his heir. He has left us a few notices of his father, which have been printed by one of his biographers, and will furnish us with a characteristic trait or two presently.

Subsequently, *after* 1522, says Frizzi the historian of Ferrara, the precise date not being discoverable, Ludovico married a wife, when he was nearly if not quite fifty years old. She was Alexandra Benucci, the widow of Tito Strozzi, a brother poet, and she survived her second poet-husband nearly twenty years, dying on September 12, 1552. And this is all we know about her! We have notices more or less substantial of Ariosto by dozens of his contemporaries; letters from him and to him; biographies many; references to him and his affairs in the familiar correspondence of his friends and acquaintances; and yet it was left for the archive-hunting historian Frizzi, who died in 1800, to discover the fact that Ariosto had a wife! The facts are singularly and curiously characteristic of the life and social habits of the time. It has been suggested, indeed, that the marriage was kept a secret, because the poet held a certain ecclesiastical preferment, which did not necessitate entering into orders, but did require the celibacy of the incumbent. And it is further remarked that the poet was habitually reticent and close respecting *all* his connections with the other sex. So much so, that one of his biographers curiously enough remarks that the figure of Cupid with finger on his lips, on the poet's favourite bronze inkstand, which may still

be seen preserved in the public library at Ferrara, was probably due to this specialty of his tone of feeling and thinking.

But the fact that his contemporaries, living familiarly with him in the same city, knew nothing as to whether he was a married man or not, will appear less extraordinary to those who are thoroughly acquainted with middle-class Italian society as it still is even at the present day, than it will to untravelled Englishmen. So entirely outside the walls of the domestic home are the lives of very many—the majority, probably—of Italian men of all classes save the highest even to our own times; so wholly is companionship and intimacy with the men they live with carried on elsewhere; so perfectly possible is it still to meet and talk with a man continually for years together without knowing whether he is married or single!

Niccolò Ariosto, the poet's father, died, as has been said, in 1500. But the immediate effect was not that Ludovico was more free to pursue his favourite studies; but rather less so, because, being the eldest of his father's numerous family, it became incumbent upon him to attend to the management of the family property and affairs. Nevertheless, it was principally about this period of his life that his Latin and Italian lyrical pieces were written. And it was much about the same time, perhaps earlier, but certainly not later than 1503, when he was twenty-nine, and his father had been dead three years, that the Cardinal Hippolito d'Este, the second son of Duke Hercules, invited him to 'enter into his service,' as the phrase then was. This service, as it would seem, implied living in the Cardinal's house, and making part of his family. But the *service* which the poet was called on to render, not only to the Cardinal but to his brother the Duke Alphonso, was of the most important and confidential character. However changed the times may have been from the days when Petrarch and Boccaccio were travelling over Europe as ambassadors from one potentate to another, the practice of selecting men of letters and poets—men who, it was supposed, could speak persuasively—for such offices was not yet extinct. And the principal service which the princes of the House of Este demanded of Ariosto was to go on their behalf on missions which involved the necessity of much diplomatic talent and the confronting of no little danger.

Julius II., that great warrior Pope, who dreamed the dream—to be once again dreamed in a very different day and by a very different man—of a united Italy under the headship of the Roman Pontiff, reigned from 1503 to 1513. The constantly shifting needs of his policy and ambition made him the professed friend

and ally of the Este princes in 1509. But, despite this friendship and alliance, a variety of other plans and schemes made Julius unwilling at that time to assist the Duke of Ferrara with the troops and money which the war waged against him by the Republic of Venice rendered very necessary to him. It was under these circumstances that Ariosto was sent to plead the cause of his patrons at the Court of Rome. It was a very different Court indeed from that which it so soon afterwards became under the immediate successor of Julius, Leo X. Warriors were more in Julius's line than poets. Nevertheless, difficult as the task of persuading the strong and obstinate will of that high-handed Pontiff to change its direction notoriously was, the eloquence of the poet-ambassador accomplished that feat. Julius made a grant of money, and promised troops, which, however, the rapid victory of Alphonso rendered eventually unnecessary.

The circumstances of his second mission made it a far more difficult one. It was again to the same Pontiff, Julius II., that he was sent, and this second journey to Rome was separated from the first by a space of less than twelve months. He went on the first occasion in December 1509, and on the second in August 1510. But in this short interval the shifting policy of Julius had veered to a position of open hostility to the Duke. Alphonso had, at the wish and following the example of the Pope, become the ally of the King of France, and had refused to be false to that alliance when a few months later the Pontiff wished him to be so. Julius gave way to one of those excesses of passion to which he was subject, and Ariosto's business at Rome was if possible to appease him. But this turned out to be beyond the power of his eloquence. Julius II. was a terrible man in his wrath, which on this occasion was none the less dangerous because it was wholly unreasonable. The envoy found that his life was in danger from the fierce old man's anger, and that it behoved him, if he would reach Ferrara in safety, to make as much haste to leave Rome as he could, facing the dangers of the roads, then in a very disturbed and unsafe condition, rather than the enraged Pontiff.

Ariosto remained in 'the service of' the Cardinal Hippolito d'Este till the death of the latter on September 3, 1520. But the last three years of this period were such as left a painful memory in his mind. On October 20, 1517, the Cardinal went to Hungary, and wished Ariosto to accompany him. This the poet declined to do, giving as the motives of his refusal—as they are expressed at length in his first Satire—the care which his health required, and the duties he owed to his family—meaning perhaps his mother, but more probably merely his brothers and sisters, who, inasmuch as the poet was then in his forty-third year, must surely

have been able to take care of themselves. To these impediments one of his biographers suggests as an additional one, that he had not yet completed the revision of his great poem, according to his wishes; as if, remarks a subsequent writer, he could not have done that in Hungary as well as in Italy! Not, perhaps, quite so well. Nevertheless, I feel it difficult to believe that the poet's refusal to accompany his patron was based on any of the motives assigned. There must, I think, have been something—perhaps a crowd of very little things—which rendered the relationship between the Cardinal and his *protégé* not so pleasant as it had been when they were both young men together. Partly it may have been, as seems not unlikely from various expressions to be met with here and there in his Satires, that he was tired of leading a dependent life, and longed for his liberty. But he does not speak in kindness of the Cardinal. In one place in the sixth Satire he speaks of the number of years during which he was ‘oppressed by the yoke of the Cardinal.’ Other phrases may be found, also, which seem to indicate that the hopes he had conceived from the friendship of his princely friend had ended in disappointment. Possibly he may have discovered that the Cardinal was scarcely fitted to be the friend and patron of a poet, when His Eminence, on being presented with the ‘Orlando Furioso’ for the first time, showed his sense of the value of the offering by saying, ‘Why, Messer Ludovico! Where in the world have you scraped together such a parcel of nonsense?’

It is certain, however, that the Cardinal Hippolito was seriously offended at Ariosto's refusal to accompany him to Hungary. He does not seem to have altogether broken with him, however, at the moment, and three years later he died. It was during the years that he passed in the Court of the Cardinal Hippolito that he composed the immortal ‘Orlando Furioso,’ which must have been begun very shortly after he entered into his service. For it was in 1516 that, after ‘ten years bestowed upon his poem,’ he resolved to allow it to be published, not because he conceived it to be as perfect as he still hoped to make it, but because he thought it desirable to hear the judgments and opinions of the world of readers. And it was not till 1532, that, having profited by the criticisms of the reading world, and by his own matured reflection and study, he caused it to be again printed, with innumerable corrections, alterations, and additions, to such an extent that the poem now consisted of forty-six cantos instead of forty as before. That the octave stanzas, which run so fluently, and seem to the reader to have been composed so easily, were in fact produced with much labour and care, that they were polished and repolished, and that no amount of *limæ labor* was spared, may be seen by anybody who will visit the

public library at Ferrara, and there, under the courteous guidance of the director of that institution, examine the manuscripts of the 'Orlando Furioso' preserved there.

Nevertheless, even the second improved edition, which indeed almost may be considered a new version of the poem, was very far from satisfying the judgment of the poet. He complains that not only his domestic troubles—lawsuits about his little property and the like—but the demands made upon his time by the Duke, into whose 'service' he entered after leaving that of the Duke's younger brother the Cardinal (i.e. about 1520), had prevented him from giving that amount of time and care to the perfection of his poem that he had wished to do. How much, however, he did accomplish in that respect is shown from a curious passage in the work of his intimate friend Cinzio Giambattista Giralaldi, on the 'Composition of Romances,' which runs thus:—

'First of all, he (Ariosto) read and revised his poem for the space of sixteen years after the first¹ edition of it (i.e. the years from 1516 to 1532). Nor did he ever pass a day during all that time without working at it either pen in hand or in his thoughts. (Three years must at least be deducted from this time, according to his own showing (Satires 4 and 6), as his biographer Barotti remarks, these years having been employed in a manner to be mentioned presently, which made all literary labour impossible.) At length, when it was brought to such a condition of correctness and increased bulk as seemed fitting to him, he carried it to many men of excellent genius in different parts of Italy to have their judgment on it—to Monsignore Bembo,² to Molza,³ to Andrea Navagero the learned Venetian commentator, historian, and poet, and to many others, whom he mentions in his last canto. And, having received their criticisms, he took his work home; and as Apelles was wont to do with his pictures, so likewise did he with his poems. For during two whole years before sending the work to press, he exposed it in a room of his house, and there left it to be judged of by anybody. And finally, having gathered thus opinions in great number both within the city and abroad, he made choice of those which appeared to him the soundest.'

¹ The reader curious in such matters must not be deceived by the date, 1515, given in an edition printed at Venice. The first edition is that of 1516. Bibliographers reckon ten editions printed during the lifetime of the poet. One or two of these seem to have been executed under his superintendence, and must be supposed to have been further essays towards that perfection which he was always hoping to reach, but never to the last succeeded in reaching to his own satisfaction.

² The celebrated *littérateur* and Cardinal, he who wrote to the Bishop of Carpentras, Sudoletto, begging him for heaven's sake not to read the Epistles of St. Paul, as they would utterly spoil his Latin style.

³ A brother poet, a Modenese.

The domestic troubles, of which we hear much, from the poet's lamentations on this score in different passages of his Satires, seem to have all turned on the 'res angusta domi,' and the failure of certain sources of revenue, which eked out the smallness of a patrimony which had been reduced by drawing on it for the supply of the needs of a family of ten children. It would seem that he was, after the death of the Cardinal, in the receipt of what he calls a 'stipendio' from the Duke, and that this was in some way, or for some reason or other, 'suppressed.' It does not appear that the misfortune arose from any ill-will of the Duke. And Barotti suggests that probably Ariosto's allowance consisted of an assignment on some custom duty, which may have been itself abolished, and the poet's 'stipendio' thus not forthcoming. He held also another source of income, which is worth mentioning as a specimen of the ineradicable jobbery and abuses which afforded the means of providing for the hangers-on of princes, whether poets and men of learning, or other less creditable dependents. Ariosto received in partnership with one Costabili (the well-known name of a Ferrarese patrician family, now extinct) the third part of the notary's fee due in a certain office in Milan on every contract drawn up there. This brought him in seventy-five crowns a year, but it was continually liable to suspension from war in Lombardy or other disturbances.

At any rate, it is abundantly clear that Ariosto was discontented with his patrons, and deemed that all that he had ever received from them very insufficiently remunerated his services. This is expressed with sufficient pungency, and with marked intention to make the complaint a permanent and unforgotten one, by the poet's assumption of a device, consisting of a bee-hive from which a rustic is driving away the bees with fire and smoke, with the motto *pro bono malum*, and it may be found printed at the end of the poem in many editions, especially in that of 1532.

There is extant, however, a curious Latin letter from Paulo Maurizio to the second Hippolito Cardinal d'Este, nephew of Ariosto's patron, which shows that others thought themselves worse treated than the poet, and which is at all events worth quoting as a curious indication of the sort of relationship then existing between 'the learned' and 'the great.'

'Your mind,' he writes, 'was offended by the liberty I took in my letters. For I complained that whereas your father's brother, a young man of high intelligence, inflamed with the love of immortality, gave a golden chain worth 500 crowns for the fables about the madness of Orlando, printed with dedication to him, you, so great a man, so celebrated, and so wealthy, did not send me so much as a brass button for my book on Roman laws, to which those mad

stories of Orlando cannot in any wise, as it seems to me, be compared.'

Our Ludovico was much troubled, too, by a lawsuit respecting a family estate held by him in the neighbourhood of Ferrara, in which the Duke's fiscal officer was his opponent. It does not appear that the Duke himself meddled in the matter in any way, and we have no means of knowing what may have been the merits of the dispute. But the poet thought, as it should seem, that the Duke might have, and ought to have, interfered in his behalf; and this was another source of discontent, which in 1522, about two years after he had entered the Duke's service, impelled him to remonstrate with Alphonso, begging him either to provide for him more effectually, or to suffer him to leave his service, in order to better his fortune elsewhere. The Duke was unwilling to accept the latter alternative, and as a means of providing for his poet courtier gave him the appointment of Governor of the Garfagnana, a mountain district in the Apennines to the westward of Modena, of which Pontremoli is in modern times the capital.

Such an appointment was by no means what the poet wanted. It was to him very much like receiving a stone in return for a request for bread. The region in question is still to a great degree, and was in those days to a very much greater degree, a wild, remote, and rough country, where it was little likely that the poet would find one congenial soul to speak to in the whole length and breadth of his 'government!' The task proposed to him was, moreover, a specially difficult and disagreeable one at that particular conjuncture. Recent war had filled those hills with disbanded soldiers, who were in fact nothing else than mere banditti, and the whole district was in a most disturbed and dangerous condition. And the poet's disgust at having to go thither, the discomforts of his life there, and his own opinion of his own unfitness for the task entrusted to him, may be read at length in the fourth Satire. Nevertheless, he succeeded in it, as a 'Governor' of more ordinary mould might probably not have succeeded. By a mixture of kindness, persuasion, and firmness, not a little aided probably (and it is very characteristic of Italy and Italian ways even to the present day that it should have been so) by his reputation as a poet, which had already reached the lawless bands infesting the district, he, before the three years, for which his appointment was to last, were at an end, succeeded in restoring a degree of order and tranquillity such as had not been known in the country for years. And one of his early biographers has preserved an account of an incident which affords us a singularly vivid and picturesque peep at the life of that epoch.

The Governor was riding one day on some business connected with his office, through a wild part of his mountain territory, with a suite of six or seven men on horseback, when on a hill side the party came upon a quantity of armed men dismounted, and lying about in the shade of the oaks that were scattered among the rocks and the short scanty herbage of the mountains, while their horses were tied to the neighbouring bushes. Who cannot exactly imagine a scene which is familiar on so many a canvas of Salvator Rosa or Jan Both? To our poet-governor, however, the scene suggested other ideas than those of the picturesque. There were known to be in the neighbourhood two free-lance chieftains named Morotto and Pacchione, mortal enemies of each other, whose respective followers made their leader's feud a satisfactory pretext for very impartially following the profession of cut-throats and highway robbers. It was not, therefore, without very considerable misgiving that the Governor and his following kept quietly on their way, which led them through the midst of the brigands. They had passed, however, unchallenged, all but one man, who happened to be a little behind the others, when the chief of the armed men called to the lagging servant to ask who was the gentleman that had just passed. 'That is the Governor!' said the man. 'What, Ludovico Ariosto!' cried the brigand chief, jumping up from the ground, where he was lazily taking his rest, and running to overtake Ariosto at the head of the little cavalcade. The poet, seeing himself thus pursued, felt no little misgiving as to the issue of the adventure. Putting, however, a good face upon the matter, he drew bridle, and waited till the armed man came up to him. The brigand, uncovering and bowing low, begged to assure him that if he had known who he was he should not have let him pass unsaluted, and added that it was a great pleasure to him to make the personal acquaintance of one whom he had so long known by reputation! His name, he said, was Filippo Pacchione, and so, again bowing low, took leave of him, somewhat no doubt to the Governor's relief.

It must have been in 1525 or 1526 that he returned to Ferrara from the Garfagnana, not a little glad that the term of his service as Governor had expired. And probably the seven years of life which remained to him after that return home were the happiest of his life. It seems certain that from some cause his circumstances must have been improved, for he not only bought the house which is still shown to visitors as his residence at Ferrara, but seems to have spent a good deal of money in altering and improving it. His principal literary employment on his return appears to have been revising and improving his five comedies, the '*Cassaria*,' the

'Suppositi,' the 'Lena,' the 'Negromante,' and the 'Scolastica.'¹ We know that the first had been composed many years previously. How far the others were written at that time, or only revised and improved, is uncertain. His main object in preparing these works for representation was to please the Duke, who was a great amateur of the theatre. And it is pretty clear, therefore, that, whatever little clouds may have passed between them, the Sovereign and the Poet remained on pleasant terms together till the end. The four finished comedies were frequently performed, as the manner of that day was, by amateur companies of the noble gentlemen of Ferrara; and Don Francesco, a younger son of the Duke himself, spoke the prologue to the 'Lena,' on the occasion of its first performance in 1528.

It would seem that it was during this portion of his life—the years intervening between his return from the Garfagnana and his death—that he composed five other cantos in the octave stanza, which are usually printed at the end of the 'Furioso.' But with what view he did so, whether with the intention of incorporating them with the 'Furioso' in a new edition, as his friend Giraldi declares that Ariosto himself told him, or whether he purposed writing a new and separate poem, as others of his biographers, Barotti especially, have thought, is a very difficult question. Certainly the former hypothesis would imply the necessity of great changes in the construction of the 'Furioso;' but upon the whole I am disposed to think that Giraldi was right, and that the poet's intention must be considered as indicating his continued discontentment with his great poem as it stands—a circumstance that need by no means be considered as derogatory to the excellence of the work, but rather as a characteristic trait of that active and mobile temperament of mind which a variety of details related of his life at this period of it show to have distinguished him.

I have spoken of the memorials of her great poet, which Ferrara lovingly preserves in the public library of the city—his manuscripts, bristling with erasures, blottings, corrections—*pentimenti*, as the Italians picturesquely call second thoughts—his beautiful bronze inkstand, his chair, his bust, &c. But by far the more interesting memorial is the little house in the Via Mirasole, now inhabited only by the *custos* placed there to take care of it, and show it to visitors. The Latin distich, which he placed there in the humble pride of ownership, may still be read on the cornice of the facade:

Parva sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, sed non
Sordida; parva meo sed tamen ære² domus.

¹ This last was left unfinished by the author, for what reason is not known.

² Small is my house, but fitted for me; standing in no man's way: not sordidly poor; but yet paid for with my own money.

Certainly the house is by no means 'sordid.' It is a very neat and comfortable-looking little house, kept in perfect repair by the municipality of Ferrara. The door of entrance is in the middle. There is a good rectangular room some eighteen feet square or thereabouts, on either side of the entrance passage in front, a good smaller room behind on the left-hand side, and a kitchen behind that on the right hand. The best room to the front on the first floor, which is larger than the room below by all the size of the passage, is spoiled to modern English notions by the stair opening into it. Probably the two rooms on the first floor behind this, looking into the garden, were deemed the best and pleasantest, and were the principal living-rooms of the dwelling. The old unconcealed beams of the ceilings, constructed on the old Italian plan, remain as they were when Ariosto sat beneath them, casting a thoughtful eye up at them ever and anon, with an amused smile on his mouth, as we may conjecture, as his pen paused over his paper. The old-fashioned little round panes of glass remain, too, in the casement windows, and contribute much towards the *statu quo* look of the dwelling. The garden at the back is now small, being no wider than the house itself, and perhaps about five times as much in depth. But in the poet's day it was much larger, extending considerably behind the other houses in the street, as they now stand.

It would seem from some notes left by his son Virginio that he originally bought the ground on June 30, 1526, on his return from his governorship, with the intention of building on it as an investment; which would indicate that he could hardly at that time have been in any stress of poverty. 'He inherited his father's house,' says Virginio, 'but subsequently betook himself to live in a little house, which he bought. He was anxious to make it what he wished by adding to the building, and spent upon it all that he could spare from his income.' He bought several small pieces of land also, and added them to the garden, and in the process of these improvements became so much attached to the place that he determined to give up his paternal house and make it his home for the rest of his days.

'But,' says his son, 'not having intended to live there when he began to build, the improvements he had made did not altogether suit his taste, and he often used to regret that bricks and mortar could not be changed as easily as manuscripts. And when people told him that they wondered that he, who could describe such delicious palaces, had done nothing better for himself, he would say that the difference was that the magnificences referred to cost no money.'

But there is one little word in these brief notes of *Virginio*, that goes to show both that the poet's buildings and improvements absorbed all his means, and that his writings were profitable to him. In speaking of the causes which led his father to resume his pen at his return from the *Garfagnana*, he says that 'he was led to do so to please the Duke's son, who afterwards succeeded him as *Hercules the Second*, and perhaps also for the sake of building.'

But the garden at the new house was *Messer Ludovico's* great delight, though he must have been but a very sorry gardener. 'In his gardening,' says his son, 'he went on in the same way that he did with his verses—never letting anything alone. He never could let anything he had planted stand three months in the same place. And when he put in peach kernels, or any other seeds, he went so often to see whether they were sprouting that he ended by killing them. And as he had very little knowledge of plants, when any weed grew up near the place where he had sown seed, he took it for granted that it was the product of his seed, and would take all possible care of it, till it grew big enough to show what it was beyond the possibility of mistake. I remember his sowing some capers once; he went every day to see if they were coming up. At length something began to show itself above the soil, and he was exceedingly delighted, till at length they turned out to be sprouts of an elder bush, and of capers there was not a trace.'

'He was not,' continues *Virginio*, 'a great reader, and cared not for many books. *Virgil* delighted him, and *Tibullus* in respect to his style. Of *Horace* and *Catullus*, too, he was a great admirer, but not much of *Propertius*.'

'He had a good appetite'—it is always *Virginio* who speaks—'and used to eat very fast, and without heeding what he ate. When he came home to dinner, if he found the table prepared with the bread upon it, he would take a roll and eat it as he walked about. Then, when the dinner was served, he called for water for his hands, and ate whatever happened to be nearest to him. Very often he would eat a bit of bread after he had finished his dinner. I think that very often he was not conscious of what he was doing, having his mind full either of his verses or his buildings. Once, when a visitor came to the house, some refreshments were brought for him, which my father immediately ate up, while the stranger continued talking to him. When he was gone my uncle took his brother to task for what he had done. But he, without being in the least disconcerted, said it was the stranger's own fault. He ought to have fallen to, and taken his share.'

He was not permitted to enjoy his home, and his leisure, and his gardening, for as many years as, looking back at his life there,

we could have wished for him. He was taken ill on December 30, 1532. His malady, as was believed, was some internal obstruction, 'which the physicians attempted to remove by purgative waters. But in doing so they ruined his stomach; and, endeavouring to remedy that evil by other medicines, they so harassed him that he fell into a hectic decline,' and died on June 6, 1533, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

Upon the whole our Ludovico must be considered to have been a happy man, and to have had his lines cast in pleasant and fortunate places. He was perhaps, like most of the scholars and literary men of that day, which produced such great numbers of them, somewhat unreasonably given to rail against fortune and his patrons. Neither he nor his biographers seem to have been struck by the fact that he was fortunate in having any patrons at all. Very insufficiently provided for by his paternal inheritance, as was likely to be the case with one of a family of ten children, he declined to pursue any lucrative profession, preferring to give himself up to study and literature in entire liberty. If it were to involve the loss of his liberty, he tells us in his second Satire, he would not accept the richest Cardinal's perferment in Rome. And it was a favourite saying with him, as one of his biographers records, that it is better to enjoy a little in peace than to satisfy great desires at the cost of toil. And the wisdom and 'generosity' of those sentiments is commended to the skies by the biographers. But Dr. Pangloss made the same philosophical discovery, and one or two more of us are perhaps capable of reaching to the same heights of wisdom. His patrons, who became such merely by virtue of his reputation as a poet, did make this *beau idéal* possible to him. No doubt the Cardinal Hippolito, and in a somewhat less degree the Duke, wished to utilise the talents of their *protégé* in some way more valuable to them than the production of poetry. And no doubt the poet served them in their needs, better probably than they could have been served by any other less gifted with the fire of native genius. But upon the whole it does not seem that he had so much cause to complain of them as he appears to have imagined. It is probable that had he been born in that last decade of the fifteenth century in any other of the states of Italy his lot would have been a less fortunate one. It is a mistake on the part of generations who feel rightly enough that no riches could be a sufficient recompense for the production of an 'Orlando Furioso' to imagine that the poet's contemporaries should have attempted to pay him for it by a little more wealth.

We may be very glad, however, that he did obtain enough to make for himself that home in the Via Mirasole, in which he seems

to have delighted so much. And as we picture him to ourselves, in the enjoyment of the friendship and goodwill of all that was best and noblest in Italy, pulling up the plants in his garden to see if they were growing, with his head so full of verses and bricks and mortar that he forgot what he was eating, we only wish that the days in the little house so fitted for him had been more in number.

A Nursery Romance.

Nor a duet,
This, but a trio !
Mamma and Pet,
Pet and her Dollie !
Such a terzet,
Sung with such brio,
Makes one forget
Fashion and folly.

Dollie's unwell !
Dollie is naughty !
Ordered to spell,
Breaks into laughter !
Likes to rebel !
Sulks and is haughty !—
Which is it, Nell ?
What is she after ?

Never mind what !
Everything's over
Now, is it not ?
Scolded or shriven,
Poor little Dot,
Wicked wee rover,
Nell has forgot
All, and forgiven !

General delight !
Mamma's declaring
Dollie all right.
Has she repented ?
Rosy and bright,
Dainty and daring,
Golden and white,
Nellie's contented.

Take her away,
Tell her a story,
Teach her to play !—
After a wooing,
Nell, I should say,
Will in her glory
Do as to-day
Mamma is doing !



A NURSERY ROMANCE.



Some Random Notes of an Idle Excursion.

BY MARK TWAIN.

II.

At dinner, six o'clock, the same people assembled whom we had talked with on deck and seen at luncheon and breakfast this second day out, and at dinner the evening before. That is to say, three rumeying ship-masters, a Boston merchant, and a returning Bermudian who had been absent from his Bermuda thirteen years; these sat on the starboard side. On the port side sat the reverend in the seat of honour; the pale young man next to him; I next; next to me an aged Bermudian, returning to his sunny islands after an absence of twenty-seven years. Of course our captain was at the head of the table, the purser at the foot of it. A small company, but small companies are pleasantest.

No racks upon the table; the sky cloudless, the sun brilliant, the blue sea scarcely ruffled: then what had become of the four married couples, the three bachelors, and the active and obliging doctor from the rural districts of Pennsylvania?—for all these were on deck when we sailed down New York harbour. This is the explanation. I quote from my note-book:—

Thursday, 3.30 P.M. Under way—passing the Battery. The large party, of four married couples, three bachelors, and a cheery, exhilarating doctor from the wilds of Pennsylvania, are evidently travelling together. All but the doctor grouped in camp-chairs on deck.

Passing principal fort. The doctor is one of those people who have an infallible preventive of sea-sickness; is flitting from friend to friend administering it and saying, 'Don't you be afraid; I *know* this medicine; absolutely infallible; prepared under my own supervision.' Takes a dose himself, intrepidly.

4.15 P.M. Two of those ladies have struck their colours, notwithstanding the 'infallible.' They have gone below. The other two begin to show distress.

5 P.M. Exit one husband and one bachelor. These still had their 'infallible' in cargo when they started, but arrived at the companion way without it.

5.10 P.M. Lady No. 3, two bachelors, and one married man have gone below with their own opinion of the infallible.

5.20. Passing Quarantine Hulk. The infallible has done the business for all the party except the Scotchman's wife and the author of that formidable remedy.

Nearing the Lightship. Exit the Scotchman's wife, head drooped on stewardess's shoulder.

Entering the open sea. Exit doctor!

The rout seems permanent; hence the smallness of the company at table since the voyage began. Our captain is a grave, handsome Hercules of thirty-five, with a brown hand of such majestic size that one cannot eat for admiring it and wondering if a single kid or calf could furnish material for gloving it.

Conversation not general; drones along between couples. One catches a sentence here and there. Like this, from Bermudian of thirteen years' absence: 'It is the nature of women to ask trivial, irrelevant, and pursuing questions,—questions that pursue you from a beginning in nothing to a run-to-cover in nowhere.' Reply of Bermudian of twenty-seven years' absence: 'Yes; and to think they have logical, analytical minds and argumentative ability. You see 'em begin to whet up whenever they smell argument in the air.' Plainly these be philosophers.

Twice since we left port our engines have stopped for a couple of minutes at a time. Now they stop again. Says the pale young man, meditatively, 'There! that engineer is sitting down to rest again.'

Grave stare from the captain, whose mighty jaws cease to work, and whose harpooned potato stops in mid-air on its way to his open, paralysed mouth. Presently says he in measured tones, 'Is it your idea that the engineer of this ship propels her by a crank turned by his own hands?'

The pale young man studies over this a moment, then lifts up his guileless eyes, and says, 'Don't he?'

Thus gently falls the death-blow to further conversation, and the dinner drags to its close in a reflective silence, disturbed by no sounds but the murmurous wash of the sea and the subdued clash of teeth.

After a smoke and a promenade on deck, where is no motion to discompose our steps, we think of a game of whist. We ask the brisk and capable stewardess from Ireland if there are any cards in the ship.

'Bless your soul, dear, indeed there is. Not a whole pack, true for ye, but not enough missing to signify.'

However, I happened by accident to bethink me of a new pack in morocco case in my trunk, which I had placed there by

mistake, thinking it to be a flask of something. So a party of us conquered the tedium of the evening with a few games, and were ready for bed at six bells, mariner's time, the signal for putting out the lights.

There was much chat in the smoking-cabin on the upper deck after luncheon to-day,—mostly whaler yarns from those old sea-captains. Captain Tom Bowling was garrulous. He had that garrulous attention to minor detail which is born of secluded farm life or life at sea on long voyages, where there is little to do and time no object. He would sail along till he was right in the most exciting part of a yarn, and then say, 'Well, as I was saying, the rudder was fouled, ship driving before the gale, head-on, straight for the iceberg, all hands holding their breath, turned to stone, top-hamper giving way, sails blown to ribbons, first one stick going, then another, boom! smash! crash! duck your head and stand from under! when up comes Johnny Rogers, capstan bar in hand, eyes a-blazing, hair a-flying . . . no, 'twan't Johnny Rogers . . . lemme see . . . seems to me Johnny Rogers wan't along that voyage; he was along *one* voyage, I know that mighty well, but somehow it seems to me that he signed the articles for this voyage, but—but—whether he come along or not, or got left, or something happened——'

And so on and so on, till the excitement all cooled down and nobody cared whether the ship struck the iceberg or not.

In the course of his talk he rambled into a criticism upon New England degrees of merit in ship-building. Said he, 'You get a vessel built away down Maine-way; Bath for instance; what's result? First thing you do, you want to heave her down for repairs, —*that's* the result! Well, sir, she hain't been hove down a week till you can heave a dog through her seams. You send that vessel to sea, and what's result? She wets her oakum the first trip! Leave it to any man if 'tain't so. Well, you let *our* folks build you a vessel—down New Bedford-way. What's the result? Well, sir, you might take that ship and heave her down, and keep her hove down six months, and she'll never shed a tear!'

Everybody, landsmen and all, recognised the descriptive neatness of that figure, and applauded, which greatly pleased the old man. A moment later, the meek eyes of the pale young fellow heretofore mentioned came up slowly, rested upon the old man's face a moment, and the meek mouth began to open.

'Shet your head!' shouted the old mariner.

It was rather a startling surprise to everybody, but it was effective in the matter of its purpose. So the conversation flowed on instead of perishing.

There was some talk about the perils of the sea, and a landsman delivered himself of the customary nonsense about the poor mariner wandering in far oceans, tempest-tossed, pursued by dangers, every storm blast and thunderbolt in the home skies moving the friends by snug firesides to compassion for that poor mariner, and prayers for his succour. Captain Bowling put up with this for a while, and then burst out with a new view of the matter.

‘Come, belay there! I have read this kind of rot all my life in poetry and tales and such like rubbish. Pity for the poor mariner! sympathy for the poor mariner! All right enough, but not in the way the poetry puts it. Pity for the mariner’s wife! all right again, but not in the way the poetry puts it. Look-a-here! whose life’s the safest in the whole world? The poor mariner’s. You look at the statistics, you’ll see. So don’t you fool away any sympathy on the poor mariner’s dangers and privations and sufferings; leave that to the poetry muffs. Now you look at the other side a minute. Here is Captain Brace, forty years old, been at sea thirty. On his way now to take command of his ship and sail south from Bermuda. Next week he’ll be under way: easy times; comfortable quarters; passengers, sociable company; just enough to do to keep his mind healthy and not tire him; king over his ship, boss of everything and everybody; thirty years’ safety to learn him that his profession ain’t a dangerous one. Now you look back at his home. His wife’s a feeble woman: she’s a stranger in New York; shut up in blazing hot or freezing cold lodgings, according to the season; don’t know anybody hardly; no company but her lonesomeness and her thoughts; husband gone six months at a time. She has borne eight children; five of them she has buried without her husband ever setting eyes on them. She watched them all the long nights till they died,—he comfortable on the sea; she followed them to the grave, she heard the clods fall that broke her heart,—he comfortable on the sea; she mourned at home, weeks and weeks, missing them every day and every hour,—he cheerful at sea, knowing nothing about it. Now look at it a minute,—turn it over in your mind and size it: five children born, she among strangers, and him not by to hearten her; buried, and him not by to comfort her; think of that! Sympathy for the poor mariner’s perils is rot; give it to his wife’s hard lines, where it belongs! Poetry makes out that all the wife worries about is the dangers her husband’s running. She’s got substantialer things to worry over, I tell you. Poetry’s always pitying the poor mariner on account of his perils at sea; better a blamed sight pity him for the nights he can’t sleep for thinking of how he had to leave his wife in her very birth pains, lonesome and friendless in the thick of disease and

trouble and death. If there's one thing that can make me madder than another, it's this sappy, damned maritime poetry!

Captain Brace was a patient, gentle, seldom-speaking man, with a pathetic something in his bronzed face that had been a mystery up to this time, but stood interpreted now, since we had heard his story. He had voyaged eighteen times to the Mediterranean, seven times to India, once to the arctic pole in a discovery-ship, and 'between times' had visited all the remote seas and ocean corners of the globe. But he said that twelve years ago, on account of his family, he 'settled down,' and ever since then had ceased to roam. And what do you suppose was this simple-hearted, life-long wanderer's idea of settling down and ceasing to roam? Why, the making of two five-month voyages a year between Surinam and Boston for sugar and molasses!

Among other talk, to-day, it came out that whale ships carry no doctor. The captain adds the doctorship to his own duties. He not only gives medicines, but sets broken limbs after notions of his own, or saws them off and sears the stump when amputation seems best. The captain is provided with a medicine-chest, with the medicines numbered instead of named. A book of directions goes with this. It describes diseases and symptoms, and says, 'Give a tea-spoonful of No. 9 once an hour,' or 'Give ten grains of No. 12 every half hour,' &c. One of our sea-captains came across a skipper in the North Pacific who was in a state of great surprise and perplexity. Said he:

'There's something rotten about this medicine-chest business. One of my men was sick,—nothing much the matter. I looked in the book: it said, give him a tea-spoonful of No. 15. I went to the medicine-chest, and I see I was out of No. 15. I judged I'd got to get up a combination somehow that would fill the bill; so I hove into the fellow half a tea-spoonful of No. 8 and half a teaspoonful of No. 7, and I'll be hanged if it didn't kill him in fifteen minutes! There's something about this medicine-chest system that's too many for me!'

There was a good deal of pleasant gossip about old Captain 'Hurricane' Jones, of the Pacific Ocean,—peace to his ashes! Two or three of us present had known him; I, particularly well, for I had made four sea-voyages with him. He was a very remarkable man. He was born in a ship; he picked up what little education he had among his shipmates; he began life in the fore-castle and climbed grade by grade to the captaincy. More than fifty years of his sixty-five were spent at sea. He had sailed all oceans, seen all lands, and borrowed a tint from all climates. When a man has been fifty years at sea, he necessarily knows nothing of men,

nothing of the world but its surface, nothing of the world's thought, nothing of the world's learning but its A B C, and that blurred and distorted by the unfocussed lenses of an untrained mind. Such a man is only a gray and bearded child. That is what old Hurricane Jones was,—simply an innocent, lovable old infant. When his spirit was in repose he was as sweet and gentle as a girl; when his wrath was up he was a hurricane that made his nickname seem tamely descriptive. He was formidable in a fight, for he was of powerful build and dauntless courage. He was frescoed from head to heel with pictures and mottoes tattooed in red and blue India ink. I was with him one voyage when he got his last vacant space tattooed; this vacant space was around his left ankle. During three days he stumped around the ship with his ankle bare and swollen, and this legend gleaming red and angry out from a clouding of India ink: 'Virtue is its own R'd.' (There was a lack of room.) He was deeply and sincerely pious, and swore like a fish-woman. He considered swearing blameless, because sailors would not understand an order unilluminated by it. He was a profound Biblical scholar,—that is, he thought he was. He believed everything in the Bible, but he had his own methods of arriving at his beliefs. He was of the 'advanced' school of thinkers, and applied natural laws to the interpretation of all miracles. Made them work, too,—at least, to his own satisfaction. Without being aware of it, he was a rather severe satire on modern scientific religionists. Such a man as I have been describing is rabidly fond of disquisition and argument; one knows that without being told it.

One trip the captain had a clergyman on board, but did not know he was a clergyman, since the passenger list did not betray the fact. He took a great liking to this Rev. Mr. Peters, and talked with him a great deal: told him yarns, gave him toothsome scraps of personal history, and wove a glittering streak of profanity through his garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech. One day the captain said, 'Peters, do you ever read the Bible?'

'Well—yes.'

'I judge it ain't often, by the way you say it. Now, you tackle it in dead earnest once, and you'll find it'll pay. Don't you get discouraged, but hang right on. First you won't understand it; but by and by things will begin to clear up, and then you wouldn't lay it down to eat.'

'Yes, I have heard that said.'

'And it's so, too. There ain't a book that begins with it. It lays over 'em all, Peters. There's some pretty tough things in it, —there ain't any getting around that,—but you stick to them and

think them out, and when once you get on the inside everything's plain as day.'

'The miracles, too, captain?'

'Yes, sir! the miracles, too. Every one of them. Now, there's that business with the prophets of Baal; like enough that stumped you?'

'Well, I don't know but——'

'Own up, now, it stumped you. Well, I don't wonder. You hadn't had any experience in ravelling such things out, and naturally it was too many for you. Would you like to have me explain that thing to you and show you how to get at the meat of these matters?'

'Indeed I would, captain, if you don't mind.'

Then the captain proceeded as follows: 'I'll do it with pleasure. First, you see, I read and read, and thought and thought, till I got to understand what sort of people they were in the old Bible times, and then after that it was all clear and easy. Now, this was the way I put it up concerning Isaac¹ and the prophets of Baal. There was some mighty sharp men amongst the public characters of that old ancient day, and Isaac was one of them. Isaac had his failings,—plenty of them, too; it ain't for me to apologise for Isaac; he played it on the prophets of Baal, and like enough he was justifiable, considering the odds that was against him. No, all I say is, 'twa'n't any miracle, and that I'll show you so'st you can see it yourself.

'Well, times had been getting rougher and rougher for prophets,—that is, prophets of Isaac's denomination. There was four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal in the community, and only one Presbyterian; that is, if Isaac *was* a Presbyterian, which I reckon he was, but I don't say. Naturally, the prophets of Baal took all the trade. Isaac was pretty low-spirited, I reckon, but he was a good deal of a man, and no doubt he went a-propheying around, letting on to be doing a land-office business, but 'twa'n't any use; he couldn't run any opposition to amount to anything. By and by things got desperate with him; he sets his head to work and thinks it all out, and then what does he do? Why, he begins to throw out hints that the other parties are this and that and t'other,—nothing very definite, may be, but just kind of undermining their reputation in a quiet way. This made talk, of course, and finally got to the king. The king asked Isaac what he meant by his talk. Says Isaac, "Oh, nothing particular, only can they pray down fire from heaven on an altar? It ain't much, may be, your majesty, only can they *do* it? That's the idea." So the

¹ This is the captain's own mistake.

king was a good deal disturbed, and he went to the prophets of Baal, and they said, pretty airy, that if he had an altar ready, *they* were ready; and they intimated he better get it insured, too.

‘So next morning all the children of Israel and their parents and the other people, gathered themselves together to see the match, and bet on it,—that is, if they did bet in that old ancient time; and like enough they did,—it’s human, you know.

‘Well, here was that great crowd of prophets of Baal packed together on one side, and Isaac walking up and down all alone on the other, putting up his job. When time was called, Isaac let on to be comfortable and indifferent; told the other team to take the first innings. So they went at it, the whole four hundred and fifty, praying around the altar, very hopeful, and doing their level best. They prayed an hour,—two hours,—three hours,—and so on, plump till noon. It wa’n’t any use; they hadn’t took a trick. Of course they felt kind of ashamed before all those people, and well they might. Now, what would a magnanimous man do? Keep still, wouldn’t he? Of course. What did Isaac do? He gravelled the prophets of Baal every way he could think of. Says he, “You don’t speak up loud enough; your god’s asleep, like enough, or may be he’s taking a walk; you want to holler, you know,”—or words to that effect; I don’t recollect the exact language. Mind, I don’t apologise for Isaac; he had his faults.

‘Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they knew how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At last, about sundown, they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

‘What does Isaac do, now? He steps up and says to some friends of his, there, “Pour four barrels of water on the altar!” Everybody was astonished; for the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he, “Heave on four more barrels.” Then he says, “Heave on four more.” Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water ran all over the altar, and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogsheads—“measures,” it says; I reckon it means about a hogshead. Some of the people were about to put on their things and go, for they allowed he was crazy. They didn’t know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and began to pray; he strung along, and strung along, about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the state and the country at large, and about those that’s in authority in the government, and all the usual programme, you know, till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the under side of his leg, and pff! up the whole thing blazes

like a house afire! Twelve barrels of *water*? Water your grandmother! *Petroleum*, sir, PETROLEUM! that's what it was!

'Petroleum, captain?'

'Yes, sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don't you worry about the tough places. They ain't tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain't a thing in the Bible but what is true; all you want is to go prayerfully to work and cipher out how 'twas done.'

At eight o'clock on the third morning out from New York, land was sighted. Away across the sunny waves one saw a faint dark stripe stretched along under the horizon,—or pretended to see it, for the credit of his eye-sight. Even the reverend said he saw it,—a thing which was manifestly not so. But I never have seen anyone who was morally strong enough to confess that he could not see land when others claimed that they could.

By and by the Bermuda Islands were easily visible. The principal one lay upon the water in the distance, a long, dull-coloured body, scalloped with slight hills and valleys. We could not go straight at it, but had to travel all the way around it, sixteen miles from shore, because it is fenced with an invisible coral reef. At last we sighted buoys, bobbing here and there, and then we glided into a narrow channel among them, 'raised the reef,' and came upon shoaling blue water that soon further shoaled into pale green, with a surface scarcely rippled. Now came resurrection hour: the berths gave up their dead. Who are these pale spectres in plug hats and silken flounces that file up the companion-way in melancholy procession and step upon the deck? These are they which took the infallible preventive of sea-sickness in New York harbour and then disappeared and were forgotten. Also came two or three faces not seen before until this moment. One's impulse is to ask, 'Where did you come aboard?'

We followed the narrow channel a long time, with land on both sides,—low hills that might have been green and grassy, but had a faded look instead. However, the land-locked water was lovely, at any rate, with its glittering belts of blue and green where moderate soundings were, and its broad splotches of rich brown where the rocks lay near the surface. Everybody was feeling so well that even the grave, pale young man (who, by a sort of kindly common consent, had come latterly to be referred to as 'the Ass') received frequent and friendly notice,—which was right enough, for there was no harm in him.

At last we steamed between two island points whose rocky jaws allowed just barely room enough for the vessel's body, and

now before us loomed Hamilton on her clustered hill-sides and summits, the whitest mass of terraced architecture that exists in the world, perhaps.

It was Sunday afternoon, and on the pier were gathered one or two hundred Bermudians, half of them black, half of them white, and all of them nobbily dressed, as the poet says.

Several boats came off to the ship, bringing citizens. One of these citizens was a faded, diminutive old gentleman, who approached our most ancient passenger with a childlike joy in his twinkling eyes, halted before him, folded his arms, says, smiling with all his might and with all the simple delight that was in him, 'You don't know me, John! Come, out with it, now; you know you don't!'

The ancient passenger scanned him perplexedly, scanned the napless, threadbare costume of venerable fashion that had done Sunday-service no man knows how many years, contemplated the marvellous stove-pipe hat of still more ancient and venerable pattern, with its poor pathetic old stiff brim canted up 'gallusly' in the wrong places, then said, with a hesitation that indicated strong internal effort to 'place' the gentle old apparition, 'Why . . . let me see . . . plague on it . . . there's *something* about you that . . . er . . . er . . . but I've been gone from Bermuda for twenty-seven years, and . . . hum, hum . . . I don't seem to get at it, somehow, but there's something about you that is just as familiar to me as——'

'Likely it might be his hat,' murmured the Ass, with innocent, sympathetic interest.

The Fairy-Man and the Lady of the Rock.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

THE fairies had always a great taste for beauty in mortals, and were ever on the look-out for lovely maidens, with the intent, if possible, to carry them off and to make them their own. A West-Highlander told me of a water-kelpie (*Ech Uisque*) who shared in this fairy failing, and persuaded a maiden to come and look at his coral cave beneath the sea. When she had gratified her curiosity, she desired to return to her own home and her own lover; and when the kelpie requested that she would remain with him and be his wife, she told him that she could not do so until she had got her spinning-wheel. He trusted to her word, and took her up through the waves, and conducted her to that part of the sea-shore where he had first seen her walking. Soon after her lover found her lying there in a swoon; so he took her home, and she told him of the kelpie. After they were married they found three trout placed outside their door, every morning—a daily gift from the kelpie for their breakfast.

This incident of the trout figures in another story that was told to me in Cantire. There was once a kelpie who lived in an inland lake, and carried on an intrigue with a beauteous maiden. She bore him a son; but, repenting of her acquaintance with the *Leannan Shee*, or fairy-lover, she desired to leave him, and requested that he would take their child into his own charge. But the kelpie would not do this; and to make his refusal the more acceptable to her he qualified it with a bribe. He said to her—

Mo nighean cruin don, gabh ri'd bhacan,
S'bheir mise dhuitse gad breachdan :

which signifies—

Maiden, deck'd with auburn tresses,
Take thy son to thy embraces;
And each morning whilst I live
Spotted trout to thee I'll give.

Either the trout or the maternal feelings prevailed; the young mother took her son, and reared him as requested, calling him by the name of Dusith, which means 'the Fairy-man.'

Whatever may have been the history of the birth of Dusith, he grew up to be a remarkable character. Of his personal appearance we may form some idea from his nickname *Shigach*, 'the Dwarf,'

two founders of the family was the elder, both the Duart and Lochbuy Macleans claimed, respectively, to be the head of the whole clan.

We now come to that Sir Lachlan Mor Maclean, of Duart, in whose history figured Dusith, the Fairy-man, the son of the maiden and the water-kelpie. But, as Sir Lachlan's mother had also met with a most remarkable experience of the sea, which obtained for her the name of 'The Lady of the Rock,' I must here tell that romantic episode, in which, as is usual, it is somewhat difficult to divide Highland history from Highland legend. In fact, one version of the story makes the lady to be a daughter of Macdougall of Lorn; but the balance of testimony is in favour of her being the Lady Elizabeth Campbell, daughter of Archibald, second Earl of Argyll. On the subjugation of the Macleans by Argyll, the latter, in order to cement the peace, consented to give his daughter in marriage to Sir Lachlan Cattanach Maclean. This was done, and a son was born to them in Mull. It is probable that the clansmen of Maclean looked upon this union with abhorrence, and that they may have urged, or compelled, their chieftain to get rid of her. Any way, she was taken—as it is said, on a dark, winter night—in a boat to a small rock, at the entrance of the Sound of Mull, midway between Duart Castle and the Island of Lismore. The rock, which is still known by the name of 'The Lady's Rock,' is covered by the sea at high water. There the hapless lady was left to meet her fate. Providentially, when the water had risen so high that it was up to her breast on the very top of the rock, her cries were heard by some boatmen who were midway between the rock and Lismore. One legend says that this boat was commanded by her foster-father, who at once knew the cry of his *dalt*, or foster-daughter. They took her safely from the rock, and carried her to her father. Meanwhile, Maclean was ignorant of her safety, and was permitted to hypocritically bewail her loss with a mock funeral; having done which, Nemesis came in the shape of the lady and her relatives, who slew Maclean. The child grew up to manhood as Sir Lachlan Mor Maclean, of Duart.

This romantic story was told to Miss Joanna Baillie by the Hon. Mrs. Damer, who, through her mother, was descended from the Macleans of Duart; and, at her suggestion, Joanna Baillie constructed from the story a tragedy in five acts, called 'The Family Legend.' The original is followed with as much closeness as could be expected. The brave, but weak and irresolute Maclean is shown as yielding, unwillingly, to the pressure put upon him by his clan. His wife—Helen, as she is called—is a true and faith-

ful wife, although she has been married to him for family reasons, and not for love. The man, indeed, who has really won her affections is Sir Hubert de Grey, the friend of her brother, the Lord of Lorne, both of whom pay her a visit in disguise. The second act ends with the vassals dragging her away from her bed-chamber to the boat. The third act opens with her exposure on the rock, and ends with her rescue, which is effected chiefly through Sir Hubert. The fourth act is occupied with her arrival at her father's castle, and the measures that are taken for the punishment of her husband. In the fifth act, Maclean and his followers arrive at Argyll's castle, and there is mutual bewailing as to the supposed death and funeral of the wife, who, as the husband asserts, breathed her last enfolded in his arms. Argyll gives a grand banquet to his guests, and a lady, magnificently dressed, but deeply veiled, takes a chair beside him. Maclean rises to drink to her health; and, as he and his followers stand with the wine-cups in their hands, Helen throws off the veil, and Maclean recognises his wife. The Macleans quit the hall, followed by Argyll's retainers; and the scene passes to the last of all, 'before the gate of the castle.' Out of the gate pour the throng that had been in the banquet-hall; and, now that they are outside the walls, and are host and guest no more, Lorne challenges Maclean to mortal combat. A fierce fight ensues, and Maclean falls dead, as Helen enters, and kneels by his body. Her pity for his fate is changed to terror, on hearing his chief follower, Benlora, say, that his aged mother, to whom Maclean's babe had been entrusted, had sworn to kill it if he returned not in safety to Mull; and, as he has been mortally wounded by Argyll's followers, he knows that his mother will avenge his death. Helen is in despair, when Sir Hubert—who, in the previous act, had ascertained where the child was placed, and had at once taken measures for its safety—appears upon the scene, 'carrying something in his arms, wrapped up in a mantle.' The something is, of course, Helen's child, and the curtain descends upon her maternal joy. According to the fashion of those days, Helen had to reappear in the actress's 'ordinary dress,' to speak an Epilogue of a lightsome and flippant character, that might well-nigh be suitable for a modern burlesque. This Epilogue was written by that unsuccessful playwright, Henry Mackenzie, 'the Man of Feeling;' and the Prologue to the play was penned by no less a person than 'Walter Scott, Esq.' I extract the following passage:—

—whoe'er has raised the sail
By Mull's dark coast has heard this evening's tale.
The plaided boatman, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar

Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
 Our humble stage shall offer to your sight ;
 Proudly preferred, that first our efforts give
 Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live :
 More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
 The filial token of a daughter's love.

This Prologue was spoken by Mr. Terry ; and, as may be concluded from the words just quoted, 'The Family Legend' was first produced (through the influence of Walter Scott) at the Edinburgh Theatre, in 1809, where it was performed with great success. Three years after, it was placed on the London stage ; and I should imagine that it might even now be played to appreciative audiences, if it were produced with the abridgments and alterations that it received when acted in Edinburgh, with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Siddons in the two chief characters. He, I may remind the reader, was the son of *the* Siddons, and appears to have been, like his father,¹ but a second-rate actor. He married Miss Harriet Murray, a beautiful and talented actress, who played Desdemona to Kemble's Othello ; and Miss Joanna Baillie, in her preface to 'The Family Legend,' expresses her thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Siddons for their great and successful exertions, and also to Mr. Siddons, as 'an able actor' and the adapter of the tragedy for the stage. It will be seen, from this account, that the romantic story of 'The Lady of the Rock' attracted considerable notice in the early part of the present century ; and tourists to Mull have still pointed out to them the scene of the attempted murder of the mother of Sir Lachlan Mor Maclean, of Duart.

The Lady of the Rock had one other child, a daughter, who, it is to be presumed, was born after the death of her father. She married Sir Angus Macdonald, of Islay and Cantire. He had a cousin, Donald Gorm Macdonald, of Sleat, in Skye, who, when on his way to visit his kinsman, at Dunyveg, in Islay, was wind-bound in a harbour, near to some possessions of Sir Lachlan. Two of that clan—or, as some say, two of the Macdonalds—made it to appear that Macdonald had 'lifted' some of the cattle belonging to Sir Lachlan, who, in revenge, fell upon the Macdonalds, and slew from sixty to eighty of them. Macdonald escaped, with the remnant of his followers, to Skye, and informed his brother-in-law, Sir Angus, of the treatment that he had received. Thereupon Sir Angus, taking with him his son James, and his brother

¹ I have heard that Mr. Siddons was originally a barber, at Walsall, Staffordshire. I was enabled to discover many particulars concerning the early history of the great Mrs. Siddons and members of her family, which were published in a paper called 'Siddoniana,' in a magazine called 'Titan,' in 1857.

Ranald, went to Duart, and the difficulty was arranged. Now it happened that Sir Lachlan rented from Sir Angus that south-western extremity of Islay called the Rinns, where there is now a lighthouse; and, as he coveted the land, and had now Sir Angus in his possession, he refused to let his brother-in-law go unless he made the Rinns over to him by a formal deed. Sir Angus was feign to comply with this demand; and quitted Mull, leaving his son and brother behind him as hostages.

In due time Sir Lachlan went to Islay to take possession of the Rinns, having with him the lad James Macdonald. He took up his quarters at the fort of Elan Loch Gorm, from whence, at the repeated invitations of Sir Angus, and the solemn promise that he should not be harmed, he removed, with his eighty-six followers, to Mullinurea. Sir Angus made a great feast in honour of his brother-in-law, and, characteristically, wound up the entertainment by surrounding the lodgings of the Macleans with three to four hundred of the Macdonalds, and making his eighty-seven guests his prisoners. It is said that the two who had told of the cattle-lifting were burnt in their quarters. When Sir Lachlan had quitted Mull, he had entrusted the management of his affairs to his kinsman, Allan Maclean, who no sooner heard of the result of the Islay entertainment, than he thought it would be a famous stroke of business on his own part if he could secure the death of Sir Lachlan, and obtain the guardianship of his young children. With this idea, he sent word to Sir Angus that his brother Ranald, who had been left as a hostage, had been put to death. The lie was believed; Sir Angus was so enraged that he swore he would slay his brother-in-law and his eighty-four men; and, to make his revenge the more sweet, and to spread the pleasure over as long a period as possible, he announced his intention of killing two men each day, and reserving their chieftain to the last. But this game of the period that Sir Angus proposed to play for forty-two consecutive days was ruthlessly interrupted by the higher powers. Some of the Macleans had applied to the young Earl of Argyll's representative, the chief of the Campbells, to intercede with the King on behalf of Sir Lachlan. They were successful; and Sir Angus agreed to stay his hand, and forego his promised pleasure of murdering his brother-in-law, on condition of receiving a full pardon for the previous murders, and also receiving as hostages Sir Lachlan's eldest son, and seven other sons and brothers of chieftains. So Sir Lachlan went back to Mull, and Sir Angus went to Ireland for a little more fighting.

But Sir Lachlan was not the man to nurse his wrath. No sooner had he got back home again—greatly to the annoyance

doubtless, of his loving cousin, Allan Maclean—than he summoned all his clan, and sailed with them to Islay, which he wasted with fire and sword, regardless, of course, of his vows, and of the safety of his son and the seven other hostages. Sir Angus, hearing of this, came back with hot speed from Ireland, and (wonderful to say) disdaining to revenge himself on the helpless hostages, sailed for Mull, and did to the land of the Macleans what they had just been doing to the land of the Macdonalds. Meanwhile Sir Lachlan was not idle; for he had crossed from Islay to Cantire, where he ravaged and plundered his enemy's possessions. And thus, says Sir R. Gordon, 'for awhile they did continually vex one another with slaughter and outrages, to the destruction almost of their countries and people.' The Mac Neills, of the Island of Gigha, and many other clans, were also involved in these feuds, which kept the Southern Hebrides in a perpetual ferment, and again called for the King's interference. He demanded the obedience of the clans; and an Act of Parliament, called the 'General Band,' or 'Bond,' was passed for maintaining good order in the Western Highlands and Isles. But the Macdonalds, Macleans, Mac Neills, and all the other Macs, great and small, treated the royal proclamation with contempt; and, refusing to have their private enjoyments interfered with, went on in their old cutting and hewing style. They even got a little foreign aid in their fighting; for the Macdonalds were assisted by a band of English mercenaries; and the Macleans had the help of a hundred Spanish soldiers, who had been on board the 'Florida,' when that vessel of the Armada was driven into the harbour of Tobermory, in Mull, where she was afterwards blown up by Sir Lachlan, who had successfully plotted to gain possession of her. For this deed he obtained a remission under the Privy Seal, the records of which are dated March 20, 1588-9.¹

And here—as is so commonly the case in the Western Highlands and Isles—the historical narrative is crossed by a story, that, on the face of it, is evidently a popular legend. To begin with, it ignores the Spanish Armada and the storm that blew a portion of 'Castile's black fleet' upon the coasts of Ireland and Scotland. This is the story, as told by the peasantry: 'There was a lovely Spanish princess, and, in her dreams, she saw a handsome man, with whom she fell violently in love. Nothing could appease her

¹ Fragments of the 'Florida' have been washed ashore, frequently, within the present century. In the year 1688, Sacheverel, governor of the Isle of Man, rescued some of the treasure, by means of diving-bells, at the depth of ten fathoms. In 1740 Sir Archibald Grant and Captain Roe sent down miners, with machinery, and recovered some guns. When George IV. visited Edinburgh he was presented by Sir Walter Scott, with some wood from the 'Florida.'

until she could meet, in real flesh and blood, with the person of whom she had seen the vision. She sought for him far and wide, through her father's dominions, but she could not find him. Then she determined to seek for him in foreign lands; and the King, her father, granted her a vessel for that purpose. She set sail from Spain, and in the course of her travels drew nigh to the shores of Scotland. A storm carried the ship to Tobermory, and she was landed on the island. A chieftain advanced to meet her—it was Sir Lachlan Maclean, of Duart, and in him she recognised the hero of her dream. She told him of the object of her voyage, and confessed her romantic attachment. His wife got to know of it, and, in order to retain the affection of her husband, she laid a plot for the destruction of her rival. She caused the ship to be blown up, when the princess was on board, and thus secured her death, together with the loss of the vessel and many of the crew. But the body of the Spanish princess was washed ashore, and was laid in a stone coffin, in the burial-ground of Kiel-Colum-Kill, where it may be seen to this day, near to the tomb of Mac-Mhic-Ian, who was shot dead with an arrow by Lochiel, at Leachd-nam-Saighid, or the “ledge of arrows.”

Such is the popular story, and as the tomb is pointed out, the tale thereby receives ‘confirmation strong as Holy Writ.’ Perhaps the legend may have had some slight aid from the popular old ballad of ‘The Spanish Lady’s Love,’ where the Englishman is wooed by her, and has to confess that he has already, in England, ‘a sweet woman to my wife;’ an insurmountable impediment to the Spanish lady’s designs.

After the blowing-up of the ‘Florida,’ by Sir Lachlan Mor Maclean, the fighting between the clans of himself and his brother-in-law was continued, accompanied with such outrageous cruelties that the feeble interference of the King was once more brought in question. Though the monarch may have had one eye to justice, he had the other fixed upon the valuable herring fisheries; so, not wishing to injure his own revenues, he forgave the two brothers-in-law on very easy terms. The patched-up truce did not continue long; they quarrelled and fought, and after various adventures and vicissitudes, which it would take too much space to speak of here in detail, the feud arose in which Dusith, the Fairy-man, played an important part.

James Macdonald, the son of Sir Angus, had now grown to be twenty-two years of age, and it was high time, therefore, that he should distinguish himself by some deed that should harmonise with the customs of the day. The opportunity offered itself, and was promptly seized by him, of setting fire to the house, at Asko-

mill, on the north side of Campbelton Harbour, in which his father and mother were then staying. Sir Angus escaped, half-roasted, from the flames, and was promptly conveyed by his son, two miles off, to Smerbie, on Kilbrannon, where he was clapped in irons. Having thus duly cared for his father, he had leisure to attend to his uncle, Sir Lachlan, who, not content with taking possession of the Rinns, was desirous to drive all the Macdonalds out of Islay, and to get the whole island under his own sway. As this was rather a tough piece of business, the friends of both parties interfered, and proposed that the matter should be settled by a conference at Loch Gruinart, in Islay. Sir Lachlan was perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, provided only that the members of the conference would ratify his claim to the entire island; and, when they refused to do so, he said they would fight for it. Thereupon ensued the battle of Loch Gruinart (or Traigh Gruinart) fought on August 5, 1598. On the morning of the battle, the dwarf Dusith, the Fairy-man, came to Sir Lachlan and offered him his services. Maclean roughly spurned him, and bade him take his services elsewhere. The dwarf promptly did so, and went over to the enemy, and Macdonald gave him a friendly welcome. Then the battle began, and waged hotly with varying success for the space of some hours. The Macdonalds were getting the worst of it, when, opportunely, a band of their Cantire friends arrived, and turned the tide of battle in their favour. The Macleans rallied for a last tremendous effort; when Dusith, the dwarf, who had been creeping about, waiting his opportunity to avenge the insult of the morning, shot an arrow straight to the heart of Sir Lachlan. The Macleans, on seeing their chieftain fall dead, fled tumultuously and sought their own safety. A portion of them made good their escape to their galleys, and sailed away safely to Duart; but the rest took refuge in the church of Kilnave. Their opponents, disregarding the sanctity of the place, forthwith surrounded it, and fired the building, destroying every Maclean therein, with the exception of one, who—at least, so runs the traditionary tale—contrived to get through the roof and escape. The church was never restored, and its blackened walls remain to this day.

Two hundred and eighty of the Macleans are said to have perished in the engagement and massacre; while Sir James Macdonald, who was himself severely wounded, had thirty of his followers killed, and sixty wounded. The body of Sir Lachlan was found among the slain, pierced by Dusith's arrow; and a woman of the Macleans took it on a car to the church of Kilcho-man, in which sacred building the only son of 'The Lady of the

Rock' was buried. Since then the church has been rebuilt, and its site has been partially changed, so that Sir Lachlan Mor Maclean's gravestone will now be found, not inside the church, but outside, close by the south-east corner. The local tradition runs, that as the woman conveyed her chieftain's corpse to the church his head was shaken to and fro by the jolting of the cart; at which her son, a youth of eighteen, who was driving the horse, made sport. This so enraged the woman that she endeavoured to stab her son for his misplaced levity. Another tradition relates how Sir Lachlan, before proceeding on his fatal expedition to Islay, consulted a witch, who—presumably without knowing who he was—warned him not to land on the island on a Thursday; not to drink of the water of a well near Gruinart; and that Maclean should be slain at Gruinart. The first warning he transgressed unwillingly, for he was driven by a tempest on the island on a Thursday; the second warning he disobeyed unwittingly, by drinking of the well before he knew that it was near to Gruinart; and the witch's prophecy was fulfilled by Sir Lachlan's death by the arrow of the Fairy-man.

The Song of the Ship 'Argo.'

TO-MORROW will be a morning of scorning,
 A lightsome, brightsome winter's day,
 When 'Argo' plunges with sidelong lunges
 Through the waves, like a seal at play:
 When the clear cold wind, from its north-west home,
 Comes out to gather the harvest of foam;
 To catch the waves, in their pride that tower,
 And beat them down, till they hurry and cower
 To hide from their master, who bends each back
 And lades his slaves with the gathered wrack;
 Yokes the white horses, and sheers each crest
 Of the smooth white hair, and with broad green breast
 They plunge by the ship, and they moan and sigh,
 But he follows them still, and the foam crests fly
 Abroad and across fair 'Argo's' decks.
 We will speed by his might, there is none may vex!

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

1870, Madame de ...
preparing for her visit to the United States.
the incidents of her artistic career which for
following sketch, whose only recommendation
authenticity, and the fact that the notes from
posed were read by the writer to the great art
correct any error which might have crept into
written under these circumstances—it ended the
ion of success for the gifted subject of it in the
aid aside. It has been taken out of its port
ndreamed of at the time it was written, to m
he past the fame of Thérèse Tietjens; to ha
future suppressed, and the bright home picture
had ventured to draw—for the home of which t
was the head and the heart, furnished ample m
rased. So shorn and maimed, this brief sket
ublic by whom Thérèse Tietjens was so truly
hom she is so truly regretted, in the belief th
interesting as what it is—an exact record, th
raises only excepted, of the story that was to
e summer day two years ago, in her pret
asant villa, when she was full of life and spi
lth, and when the last fear that would have c
hearer was that the end of that story could

Thérèse Tietjens was born at Hamburg. H
he upper mercantile class, and her father
birth, a prosperous distill

recognised by one at least of those who heard it, as more than the strumming of a child. The needlewoman employed by the family early declared that little Thérèse was born to be an artist, and would promise her that she should be taken to Herr Kornet, the Director of the Stadt Theater of Hamburg. When Thérèse was nine years old, the great misfortune of her father's death befell his family; and her mother, burthened with many children and many cares, found the latter augmented by the opposition on all sides of the family which her youngest daughter's pronounced and unmistakable artistic tastes and instincts excited two or three years later. Thérèse Tietjens retained a distinct and affectionate remembrance of her father, whose worth she was not too young to recognise, and whose appreciation of her genius would have been the best reward of her brilliant and laborious career. It was her great privilege to have her mother spared to her until three years before her own death; her mother, whose perseverance in carrying out her wishes secured for her their full fruition.

During the years immediately succeeding her father's death, Thérèse played and sang incessantly, and made it plain that she would be an artist, with or without the sanction of her relatives, though the absence of instruction might make her talent unavailing, save as a source of pleasure to herself. Ultimately, her mother resolved to have her taught, if a good authority should pronounce favourably upon her voice. She took the young girl, then just fourteen, to a certain Madame Delevie, in the town of Hamburg; and that lady, having heard the timid girl sing an air from 'Der Freyschutz,' pronounced, in an off-hand and decisive manner, that 'she had *very little* voice indeed! It would never come to anything remarkable; with good teaching, the Fräulein *might* make a tolerable concert singer, but she could not undertake to say so positively.' To increase the effect of this blow, a pet pupil, one Thérèse Wagner (since quite unknown to fame) was shown off triumphantly to the disconcerted candidate, and the mother and daughter withdrew, the one perplexed, the other crying bitterly, but, fortunately for the world, unconvinced. When they had gained the street, Madame Tietjens was so much distressed by her daughter's grief that she said: 'We will go and ask Madame Kornet, she is at the other corner of the street.' They went to her house—thus taking the first step towards the fulfilment of the needlewoman's promise—and Madame Kornet bade Thérèse sing to her. The selected air was the well-known, 'When the swallows homeward fly.' Very different was Madame Kornet's estimate of the voice which thrilled her at once with a conviction that genius dwelt in the girlish form before her. The eyes of the young

were still wet with tears, and her mother frankly explained their cause. 'Not only can something be done with her voice,' said Madame Kornet, 'but something very grand; and that after twelve, or perhaps only six lessons.' That day, that interview, laid the foundation of a friendship between Madame Kornet and Thérèse Tietjens, which subsisted unbroken to the last, and was deeply cherished by both parties to it. The wife of the Director of the Stadt Theater recognised the latent histrionic ability in the girl, as well as the glorious possibilities of her voice, and was especially struck with the 'veiled' tone of the middle notes, in which exquisite quality it resembled that of Jenny Lind. So quickly and deeply was she interested, that she spoke of Thérèse Tietjens to Herr Babnigg, a famous tenor from Dresden, who was then residing at Hamburg, and entreated him to give her lessons in singing. He consented to do so, and, discovering at once that she had histrionic powers of no mean order, in addition to a voice which he speedily declared to be quite wonderful, he gave her forty singing lessons, and instructed her in acting after a method peculiar to him, and most effective. He was delighted with her natural depth of expression both in voice and countenance, and developed it thus:—He would make her sing and act with her back turned to him, exactly as if she had been alone, so that she was undisturbed by his gaze, and the play of feature and gesture responded freely to the conception of the singer. So admirably did this method answer, that on her very first appearance on any stage—which took place in 1848, when she took the part of Irma, in Auber's operetta 'Le Maçon,' on the occasion of Herr Babnigg's benefit—she displayed a self-possession and entire absorption in the business of her rôle, which would have done credit to an actress and singer with years of stage training behind her. With this performance—during which she concealed an error of the orchestra (they had missed a symphony of four bars), and calmly began again to sing her part—the future greatest singer in the world commenced her professional career. It was almost a *fête de famille*; everybody knew everybody else, and the acclamations which hailed the brilliant success of the *débutante*, had in them something to warm her heart as well as to raise her hopes, and stimulate her ambition. Prolonged and vehement applause greeted her, the first deep draught of 'the wine of life, success,' had been offered to her girlish lips. It strengthened and encouraged, but it did not intoxicate her.

Not very long after this her first triumph in the art whose devoted and faithful servant she was, until she became its mistress and queen,—her first deep sorrow, her first experience of the bitter deceptions of life, came to Thérèse Tietjens. She had made a

début which satisfied her friends that she had within her reach all the triumphs of an artist's success, that success would accompany her departure from the beaten tracks of a woman's life, and would justify her opposition to their opinions and prejudices. But now there arose another influence in her life, and she proposed, not indeed without many a pang, to renounce her former wishes. She became betrothed to an officer in the German army, whose family were as much opposed as her own to the idea of her becoming a public singer. For some time before the marriage, Thérèse was to reside, according to the custom of the country, with the parents of her betrothed at Holstein, for the purpose of learning housewifery in all its branches on the admirably complete German system which teaches housekeeping as at once a science and a fine art, and lays thereby the foundations of so many happy and frugal homes. Thérèse Tietjens submitted to this custom, and applied herself to learn housekeeping with the thoroughness which was characteristic of her; rapidly becoming mistress of the art in all its details. She became an accomplished proficient in needlework, and was very fond of that occupation which is so erroneously supposed to be incompatible with high artistic tastes and pursuits.

But, amid all this dutiful observance, the girl pined for the music which was the true element of her soul. Her ambition and her former hopes were profound secrets; the family of her affianced lover were full of old-world prejudices and notions, and would have regarded her with disapproval had they suspected her of the gift of genius. Hidden away among her little belongings, Thérèse Tietjens treasured up a morsel of the costume of Irma in 'Le Maçon'; the dress which she had worn on the occasion of her first and only triumph. This she looked at and wept over in secrecy, with all the sentiment of her age and temperament, and with some fear that the marriage she was about to make, would have in it no real compensation for the price she would have to pay in sacrifice and relinquishment. At length, one day, her guardian arrived at Holstein. This gentleman was associated with her mother, by her father's will, in the care and governance of the family, and was more than any member of it strongly opposed to the idea of a stage career for Thérèse. His mission to her on this occasion was a sad one. It was nothing less than to announce to her that her intended marriage could not take place. Certain facts connected with the character and conduct of her betrothed lover had come to the knowledge of her guardian, and the marriage must be renounced. The young man's parents were informed of the sad truth, and made no opposition to the rupture of the engagement. Thérèse returned to Hamburg with her guardian,

who took her to live at his own house. Here she underwent something which may fairly be called persecution, on account of her artistic proclivities, and her renewed determination to embrace an operatic career. Her friends enjoyed the music which she made for them at home, but they would not permit her to follow the manifest bent of her genius and her character. It needs no very strong effort of imagination to conceive the pain and discomfort of this period of the life of Thérèse Tietjens. It came to an end in consequence of a series of provocations which roused the young girl to an act of overt rebellion.

Things came to a climax thus. Thérèse persisted in singing at a concert given for a charity, and she knew that the step was final. She went straight home to her mother's house in the dress which she wore at the concert, and her guardian, as a final mark of reprobation, refused to allow her clothes to be sent to her. With Thérèse's return all hesitation vanished from the mind of Madame Tietjens; her daughter was to be an artist. In September 1849, Thérèse entered upon a small engagement in Altona, where she made her *début* as Agatha in 'Der Freyschutz.' Her success was immediate and great; the versatility of her talents was the source of astonishment as well as admiration; the adaptability of her voice was, as it remained to the end, as marvellous as its power. No music came amiss to her, no matter for what order of voice it had been written. She sang the music of Rossini's 'Giuletta' (in German); she sang the music of 'Nancy' and of 'Martha' on alternate nights; she sang in operettas and in vaudevilles; in fact, she sang everything. It may not be amiss, at this point of our brief memoir, to remark that in this respect at least there can exist no doubt of the superiority of Thérèse Tietjens to every opera singer prior to or during her career—not one has ever had so extensive a *répertoire*, not one has combined such variety with such scope of powers. Her first engagement came to an end, fortunately, before she had permanently injured herself by the over-taxation of her extraordinary talents. She was taken ill with a serious affection of the chest and spitting of blood, which excited considerable alarm. Her strong constitution, both mental and physical, came, however, to her assistance, and she surmounted the attack. In the following summer she accepted an engagement at the Stadt Theater of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, to sing what are called in Germany the 'Jugenglück' parts, and during that engagement she sang the music of the 'Huguenots' and of the 'Nozze di Figaro,' and took alternately the parts of Elvira and Zerlina in 'Il Barbiere.' The nine months during which she thus exercised and taxed her powers increased her confidence in her own future, and satisfied

all who heard her that one of the greatest singers the world had ever known was among them. Her next engagement introduced her to Austria. She sang at Brün for two years, and there introduced, for the first time in any German district, 'Rigoletto,' in which she performed Gilda's rôle to absolute perfection. She was equally grand in the grand music of 'Le Prophète.' Her singing in the rôle of Berta so astonished and delighted the Herr Kappel-meister Ander from Vienna, that he sent a wonderful description of the young prodigy from Hamburg to Vienna, where Mr. Kornet was director of the Opera House. Thus were the promise and prophecy of the old needlewoman in the old home brought very near to their fulfilment. All this time the singer who was so near to greatness was an indefatigable student. Everywhere she went she had lessons from the most eminent professors, and she shrank from no exertion; to use her own words, she was 'always singing.' While she was at Brün, Madame Sachoska Stilkezesi, a well-known public singer of that day, who had instructed her formerly, was at Vienna, and wrote to her, 'Come over here for one day, just to be heard—you can stay with me.' It was a tempting proposition; to accept it might turn Thérèse's provincial into a metropolitan reputation; but how was she to go to Vienna? She had no permission from the director at Brün, and she had no passport. She triumphed over these obstacles. Her eldest sister had married Captain Kruls, an Austrian officer, some time before, and Thérèse borrowed her passport, and after the evening's work (no light one, for the opera was 'William Tell'), the young singer started by the train for Vienna. She arrived in the morning, and sang Alice's part in 'Robert le Diable,' in the presence of the director, in the middle of the day, Herr Kornet being present. Immediately on the conclusion of the performance she was requested to walk upstairs to the council-room of the Direction, and they then and there made a contract with her for three years, at a yearly increasing salary. The first year she was to receive 2,000 *guldens*, the second year, 3,000, the third year, 4,000. This was indeed a stroke of fortune, however well due to her deserts, to the young singer who was then receiving only 100 *florins* per month. She left for Brün immediately, and reached the station in due time; but not before the news of her escapade and its results, which had been flashed thither by telegraph. On her arrival she was met by the director, who accosted her with a frowning face, and in a angry tones threatened her with the penalty of her unauthorised proceeding—a fine. The trick succeeded for a moment; the next moment, the actor broke down in his rôle, and with a smiles heartily *congratulated* the heroine of that eventful

About this time, Jenney Ney, who was a great singer of that day, left Vienna for Dresden, and Thérèse Tietjens went to Vienna to fulfil her first engagement there. She sang alternately with Mademoiselle Lagrua (who had also a great reputation), and worked as only she has ever worked in her laborious profession. Her success was immense, and the interest of the occasion was enhanced by the fact that *débuts* were made in Vienna simultaneously, by singers under the direction of Herr Kornet, and that all three were successful. The three were, Thérèse Tietjens; Bach, a baritone; and Steger, a tenor. Of the two latter, Bach is still singing at Vienna, and Steger has had a distinguished Italian career. Thérèse made an extraordinary impression in the part of Mathilde in 'William Tell,' and from that time forth her fame steadily increased at Vienna, and was spread abroad in other European capitals. She was always ready and always helpful; her manifold powers were the admiration of all; and the perfect ease with which she produced great effects both in acting and singing was recognised as a special characteristic of the artist in whom all the traditional qualities of serious tragic opera were revived, and indeed, as it was soon to be universally acknowledged, magnified. She sang in operas during her Vienna engagement, regularly fourteen times a month, but between operas and concerts almost always, in reality six times a week. Her voice grew marvellously in power, and deepened in melody; and her *physique*, which so admirably fitted her for the grand rôles of serious opera, the 'heavy parts' as they are technically called, assumed its perfect development. While she was singing alternately with Mademoiselle Lagrua, she was very inadequately remunerated in comparison with that lady, who received 16,000 gulden, and sang considerably less in reality, but nominally their work was the same. Thérèse asked for an increase of salary. She had been offered 1,000 gulden per month, and a month's *congé*, to go to Berlin; but she had already signed her contract, and had promised Herr Kornet that she would not go anywhere without letting him know. When the Viennese Direction heard of the Berlin offer, they wrote to Herr Von Hullsen that he was spoiling the market, by offering such terms to young artists; and he withdrew the proposal. An imperial decree restricted the highest salaries for opera singers at Vienna to 9,000 gulden; and Thérèse found herself obliged to put up with the 6,000, which was the amount of Joanna Wagner's salary also. Infinitely greater than had been expected as her success had proved to be, much below the value of her services as the sum paid to her was, she was obliged to remain at Vienna until the term of her engagement should expire. Vexatious as this was in certain respects,

it served to establish her fame. In the 'off' season, Thérèse 'starred' at Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, and Leipsic, and achieved an undisputed triumph in tragic opera.

Our necessarily brief chronicle of the career of Mademoiselle Tietjens now approaches a most important epoch in her life—the event which was to precede her introduction to the scene of her highest and most undisputed triumphs, and her long reign as *prima donna assoluta* at Her Majesty's Opera. During her sojourn in Vienna, Thérèse Tietjens had inaugurated that reputation for charity which will long keep her memory green; she had repeatedly sung at concerts for the benefit of the poor; and her social success equalled her professional eminence. She went into the best society, and frequented it constantly; she was exceedingly fond of dancing, and Vienna is the city of all Europe where people dance most and best. Her strength and energy enabled her to combine her artistic and social pursuits, as few persons could do; she would dance until three in the morning, and learn at nine that she had to rehearse for the performance of a 'heavy' opera; but it made no difference to her; nothing frightened, tired, or discouraged her. It was while life was thus bright and busy, and full of triumph for her, that Mr. Lumley, the well-known London *impresario*, heard her sing at Vienna, just before the Christmas of 1857. The opera was 'Iphigenia,' by Glück; and her performance convinced the best judge of singing in the world, probably, that a prodigy of song was before him. Mr. Lumley sought the presence of Mademoiselle Tietjens, and immediately offered to engage her for Her Majesty's Opera. One obstacle stood in the way. Could she sing in Italian? 'No,' she replied, 'but I can learn the language.' It was agreed that she should do so, but that the strictest secrecy should be maintained, that absolutely no one should know there was any project on foot for her going to London; and that she should at once commence the study of 'Il Trovatore,' 'Gl' Ugonotti,' and 'Le Nozze di Figaro,' in Italian. To that study she devoted her three months' *congé*, and she succeeded in mastering the strange tongue. It was in the spring of 1858, during a *congé* of six weeks, that Thérèse Tietjens made her first appearance in London, in the presence of a brilliant, but notoriously cold and critical audience, as Valentine, in 'Les Huguenots,' at Her Majesty's Theatre. Mademoiselle Piccolomini, whose career in London was very brief, sang with her on that occasion. Her success was unequivocal, and subsequently the Queen and Prince Consort came to hear her five times. On the second occasion, the Queen threw her bouquet to the new Valentine, and the crowded theatre rang with such applause as had seldom been heard there;

never since Giulia Grisi was in her prime. At this point begins the history of Thérèse Tietjens' sovereignty of song. She was immediately engaged to sing at three Court concerts, and her name was in every mouth. The rush for places to see and hear the new singer was unprecedented, and it was remarked on all sides that her pronunciation of the Italian language was so pure, it was difficult to believe she was not Italian by birth. During her first sojourn in England, Thérèse Tietjens lived at Brompton, in a small house in Gloucester Terrace, which has since been pulled down. On the second occasion, in the following year, she lived at Clairville House, Brompton, the former residence of Jenny Lind. The garden attached to this house was celebrated as the resort of numerous nightingales, and might fairly be cited as a testimony to the truth of the proverb, which says that 'birds of a feather flock together.'

In the interval between the first and second visit of Mademoiselle Tietjens to London, an incident occurred which proved the devotion of the great artist to her art, and tested her power of sacrifice to its imperious demands. An Austrian nobleman fell in love with the great singer, and asked her to become his wife, at the same time telling her that she must, in the event of her accepting him, be prepared to abandon her career as an artist. There was no small trouble in her mind; her heart counselled the acceptance of the Austrian noble's suit, her good sense and her good taste made her appreciate the well-founded pride which dictated the condition he proposed. His fortune was equal to his rank; he did not desire to marry a 'golden-throated' bride, in order to live in luxury upon her earnings; and he counted retirement and exclusiveness as among the privileges of the rank with which he could endow her. And the object of his choice honoured him for his scruples. Artist or woman? was now the question, and Thérèse Tietjens, not without some struggle, decided. 'I *could* give him up,' as she put it, most simply, in telling the story: 'but I *could not* give up my art. Therefore I could have had no right to marry him, for it was clear that I did not love him best.' She refused the noble suitor, and accepted this circumstance as the seal of her vocation. Thenceforth she lived for her art alone. Her Viennese engagement came to an end in 1858, and her reign at Her Majesty's began.

It might have been expected that the grand style of the new singer, her artistic tragic acting, and her marvellous voice, would have created a great 'sensation' from the first; so they did, but no one was quite prepared for the quiet supremacy with which Thérèse Tietjens assumed her sway, undisputed and

untroubled, over the realm of serious opera in London. She ceased almost from the first to be a 'novelty,' an 'event,' a subject of comment and speculation, and became an 'institution,' as the conservatism of England delights to class all that the English people admire and like. Her unrivalled artistic qualities were backed by some intellectual and characteristic traits as rare and admirable; immense industry, ready sympathies, generous impulses, and a remarkable absence of egotism. These things were early recognised in her, and Thérèse Tietjens had a place as secure in the regard of her adopted country as in the list of great artists. From 1860, to the hour which removed her from the lyric stage, she was the legitimate Queen of Song in England, the *prima donna assoluta* of Her Majesty's Opera; and the history of her career has been written, season after season, by the most accomplished musical critics of the London press, and by the most brilliant chroniclers of the pleasures of society and the records of art; until, at length, Thérèse Tietjens was rather 'taken for granted' than criticised. It is not the purpose of this brief memoir to supply a *catalogue raisonné* of her achievements, during the seventeen years over which her absolute sway extended; her *répertoire* is fresh in every memory; we shall therefore merely record that not only was her *Fidelio* acknowledged to be the finest performance of the part, in both the dramatic and musical sense, ever witnessed, but she was the only artist who attempted it on the English stage. An attempt was made during the season of 1875 to produce '*Semiramide*,' upon the boards of Covent Garden, but it resulted in failure. Thérèse Tietjens was the only *Norma*, the only *Semiramide*, the only *Medea*, and the only *Fidelio* of her time. That it was she who introduced the opera of '*Faust*,' which has since achieved such immense popularity, is a fact too little remembered by either the public or the critics. Her *Margarita* was an exquisite performance, and the 'houses' which she drew in 1861 are memorable in the history of Italian opera. She had long given up the part, from a belief that her full figure was not suited to the girlishness of the victim of *Faust* and *Mephistopheles*; but no one who ever heard Thérèse Tietjens' singing in '*Faust*,' or witnessed her acting of *Margarita's* part in that terrible story, which she performed a hundred and fifty times, can forget the profound and absorbing impression she made. In 1861 she created the part of *Margarita* in London. It was the last season in which the taste and judgment of London society were to have the advantage of the discrimination and sympathy of the Prince Consort to guide them; the last season during which Queen Victoria was to be seen in the Opera House, where she had been so

constant a visitor. The Prince appreciated Thérèse's Margarita to the utmost, and was indeed a warm and discriminating critic of her performance in every opera of her *répertoire*. Among the remarkable features of her career must be specially mentioned the immense popularity, amounting indeed to personal attachment of a most enthusiastic kind, which she speedily acquired in Dublin. The Dublin audience has always been a favourite audience with really great artists and actors, and the *cachet* of its approbation highly esteemed by them. Giulia Grisi had been a perfect idol with the Irish people, and they were disposed to regard with close criticism her successor in the great lyrical honours of the stage. But Thérèse Tietjens had nothing to fear from their criticism, and everything to expect from their taste and love for music. She won the suffrages of the Emerald Isle at once, and she reigned there with undisputed sway as the Empress of Song. Her annual autumnal tour was like a royal progress, and the proceedings of the crowds who welcomed her and watched for her formed a record of enthusiasm at once amusing and affecting. Perhaps her *Lucrezia Borgia* was the most eminently popular of all her rôles with the Dublin people; but it is difficult to pronounce decisively on this point; she was so thoroughly appreciated there. Her *Margarita* produced a great effect, and her *Marta* was one of the prime favourites at the Theatre Royal.

When, several years ago, it was proposed to her to sing in English oratorio, Thérèse Tietjens at first declined to do so, but she at length yielded to the persuasions of Mr. Townsend Smith whose lamented death has preceded hers by so short a space. He perceived that in the great German *prima donna* a successor to that sweetest of sweet singers of sacred music, Clara Novello, was to be found. She entered upon this new phase of her artistic career by singing in the oratorio of 'The Creation,' at the Crystal Palace, in 1859. The production of this work there was a great event in Art history, and inaugurated an entirely new era of music in England. The experiment was eminently successful, and the fame of the great singer spread widely among classes of the population who had no previous personal knowledge of her genius. From that time, and especially since the development of the Opera-Concert system, which received its first impulse from her, she became in the widest, as she had always been in the highest, sense the most popular of singers. That popularity no doubt was largely assisted by her fidelity to the United Kingdom. In England, Scotland and Ireland she was content to behold her empire. She occasionally sang in Germany, but never accepted engagements in France or in Russia; and her Concert Tour to America in 1875 was

the only exception to the rule which gave all her time and toil to the United Kingdom. A splendid reception and a superb triumph were accorded her on the other side of the Atlantic; and among the plans for the future, which were destined never to be fulfilled, was a second American tour, in which the great *prima donna* was to have been heard in opera.

Of recognition from modern composers, Thérèse Tietjens received an ampler share than has been accorded to any artist. Au-ber, whom she has so frequently interpreted, once said to the writer of this sketch: 'I am the Nestor of critics as regards opera singers; I have heard them all for two-thirds of a century, and I remember them all. I assert that never has a finer voice been heard than Tietjens', never has such an actress in tragic opera been seen. There is nothing like her now, of course, *cela va sans dire*. She is of the old school, the *true* school.' For her Sir Julius Benedict wrote his 'Santa Cecilia' and his 'St. Peter,' for her he wrote his 'Richard Cœur de Lion.' The great event of the opera season of 1875 was her elevation of the Ortrud of Wagner's 'Lohengrin' to the height of a great tragic rôle, which elicited the eccentric composer's enthusiastic admiration, and made him ardently desire that Mademoiselle Tietjens should sing in his famous 'Trilogy.' This, too, has to be reckoned among the things which might have been.

The reopening of Her Majesty's Theatre this year was an event of much interest to the musical world; and the *rentrée* of Mademoiselle Tietjens as Norma, her singing and acting on the occasion, which were quite equal to any of her previous achievements, gave a seemingly complete and welcome contradiction to the rumours of her ill health, which had been circulated for some time previously. She was received with rapturous and prolonged applause, and her expressive face evinced the pleasure, amounting to strong emotion, which the demonstration afforded her. Only twice again was she to stir the hearts of a great crowd with her magnificent voice, and to receive the ovation which, as she once said to the writer of these lines, 'is a full reward for any toil, and is always as new as a surprise.' A few nights later she sang in 'Il Trovatore,' and then on May 19, for the last time, in 'Lucrezia Borgia.' As Lucrezia she had first captivated the English public; as Lucrezia she took her unconscious leave of them. From that date, for the singer 'the rest is silence;' for the woman all that remained was suffering, patience, and release. On the morning of October 10, 1877, she died, in the forty-seventh year of her age, universally regretted. Few great artists have known so happy a life as hers, one so full of the triumphs of

genius, and the best affections of the heart. Innumerable are the tributes of appreciation and regret which have been borne by the press to the great singer whom we have lost, before time had touched, to injure, her; from among them the writer selects the following, taken from the 'Spectator' of October 13, as the fullest expression of the estimate of the character of Thérèse Tietjens made by those who enjoyed the privilege of her friendship:

'The death of Mademoiselle Tietjens deprives the lyric stage of the greatest artist, both as singer and actress, of her time. No decline of her unequalled powers had taken place; she never sang more superbly or acted more grandly than on the last occasion on which she was to be heard and seen by the public, who recognised her as the supreme mistress of her art twenty years ago. Herein her fate differs widely from that of most famous singers. Not only the loss of an incomparable artist is deplored by those who mourn her. She was a noble woman, great of heart, a constant friend, full of charity, home-loving, and kindly, of high courage. Her prolonged sufferings were borne by her with heroic fortitude and ceaseless solicitude for the feelings of those around her. At the height of her renown, she was ever keen to recognise and eager to assist aspirants in her own art; liberal of praise; thoroughly appreciative of her own great genius, but untouched by vanity, as incapable of envy as her position was beyond rivalry. In all things essentially great, Thérèse Tietjens has left a loved and honoured memory, and has gone to her grave attended by the best blessings—those of the poor.'

That Night.

I.

'LISETTE! Lisette! do not go! oh, do not go! such an hour! such a night!'

The girl's voice ceased, and to the darkness of the muffled earth a deeper darkness seemed added by the dying of her tones. There was no sound abroad. No light came from the vacant blackness overhead. No ray helped the eye to an idea of distance. There was no means of determining any object outside the limits of touch. The door-step upon which the speaker stood, the door-jambs which she grasped as she leaned forward into the formless void, were all for which she had the evidence of her senses. She knew her younger sister Lisette had passed through that door. She knew that door opened on a short garden path terminating at a gate on a long, bleak, straight road that ran across a desolate moor. She knew that for miles on either side no habitation of man, no tree, no tall shrub was visible by day. At each side of the road a deep drain lay mute, stagnant. The drains had been dug to afford materials for making the road, and the waters of the moor had crept stealthily into them, and silently filled them up, and crouched ten feet deep ready to seize upon him who in the dark might scale the low dyke and seek to gain the level waste. Marion knew all this, and more.

She knew that upon the morning of this day a message had come saying that John Maine would call to see Lisette that night. John Maine and Lisette were lovers. John Maine had made love to Lisette for a year; six months ago all had been settled. But somehow of late Lisette was sad and John Maine came rarely, and did not stay long, and sent messages but seldom. Something was wrong. Lisette did not complain. She said there was something strange about John, but that he was as kind—kinder to her than ever; he seemed, however, uneasy, and absent-minded, and changed; changed in what, she could not tell: in general manner rather than towards her. And Marion of this matter could learn no more.

Marion thought a good deal. She thought—Ah, my poor Lisette! my own, my only sister Lisette! it will kill her if anything goes wrong, for she is a deep, wild, passionate nature. Few suspect that—she is so quiet, so still, so absent-minded in her eyes.

But she loves John Maine. She loves him so much that life is a skylark's song, but he the sun. She loves him so that the obscure waters lying out there on either side of the road through the sheer black would be the Lethe of her despair. That Marion thought.

Why had he not come? It was close to midnight, after eleven some time. She and Lisette had sat up in the back of the house waiting. Their mother, and old Jane the housemaid, and old Tom the gardener, had gone to bed early. Oh, why had he not come? could it be he was tiring of Lisette? could that be?

She turned her head from right to left in the direction of the clefts of stagnant water, and shuddered.

The village of Barrowleigh, where John Maine lived, was only four miles distant down that road. They both, she and Lisette, had often seen him a mile off as he came towards them waving his hat, or his handkerchief, or both. Oh, how Lisette's face would brighten when she saw him! How her dark eyes would light up! How her pale cheek would flush! How her hands would relax on anything she held, her hat or a flower, letting it fall to the ground! How she would bend forward her neck and seem to listen for his voice with her ears, with her hungry eyes, with her parted lips! And how quickly and softly her breath would come! But once he was near and could see, she changed. She became her old, calm self again, and only for a strange, deep under-trill in her voice, and a certain wonderful lengthening out of syllables until they acquired new and deeper meanings, he might have been old Tom the gardener.

Once in the dusk when the two sisters had been talking of him and Marion had said something about her being too cold, she had arisen and flung up her arms and then drawn them swiftly across her bosom and held them fast, whispering:

'My love! my love! my love! If you only knew how wild I am about you! If you only knew how my heart aches when you are not here! how my very soul seems dull with excess of pleasure when you are by!'

Then she had sat down and asked Marion, 'What did I say? Some nonsense, no doubt. Don't mind my nonsense, Marion. Let us go out into the air.'

And after that Marion stood in a kind of fear of Lisette, and let her be.

Lisette was now gone out into that awful night, at that wild hour. She had offered her company, but Lisette would not hear of it. Lisette had said:

'If I do not hear his footstep when I have gone a mile, I shall return. The walk will do me good, I shall sleep better after it.'

'But there is no chance of his coming, of his being on the road at such an hour.'

'There is something horrible in the air, I am suffocating and must walk. Wait up for me, and have a light—this dark is hideous.'

No one ever came by that road after daylight was gone except those for the Moor House, so that Marion felt none of the ordinary uneasiness such a design might cause.

After a little while she turned into the house, leaving the front door open, and sat down in the back room, awaiting the return of Lisette.

II.

ALONG the straight road lying between the two clefts Lisette walked slowly with her head thrown up so that any sound in front might reach her quickly. She knew the road well, had known it from her earliest childhood. She could have trodden it blindfold. She was now treading it by the aid of blind tradition in her memory. To right and left the stolid darkness reached from the invisible earth to the sightless heavens. The darkness opened before her and closed behind her, folding her round as strictly as water folds round a stone falling through sea-depths in a cave.

She did not know it was dark. She did not know it was still. She felt that if he were approaching she should hear his tread. She knew that when he had come she should know his voice. Oh, it was too bad he stayed away! What a change had arisen in him! How was this cruel change to be accounted for? She had done nothing to cause it. There had been no quarrel. But worse, a thousand times worse than any quarrel, he had of late grown reserved. He no longer spoke out to her freely and joyously, as in the delicious, bygone time. In her presence he seemed nervous and ill at ease. When they met he scanned her face hastily, fearfully, as though he dreaded something. What was it he dreaded? Not that she had altered towards him. He knew her too well for that. But why did he shun her? Of old, no evening passed without his coming. Now, for the past month, he had stayed a week away at the time. It was ten days since she had last seen him. This morning Tom the gardener had brought news he would be with her that night. It was close to midnight now and he had not arrived. Oh, how sunny-faced he used to be! How his blue eyes softened when he looked into hers! How his strong arms wound slowly and surely round her, holding her tenderly, but as though no power on earth could steal her from his embrace!

How his lips had lingered ! How he had shaken with sighs as he released her and went ! And now what had all this faded to ? He was still tender, but a half-concealed fear seemed to come between them. An airy dread appeared to unnerve his embrace and kill the sweet purpose of his eyes. An invisible hand drew him back from her, and their lips met but hastily. Why should this be ? Was not all arranged ? Were there not to be deep kisses now, while they were lovers ? Surely he might not fear she objected to the delicious mystery which the lips of lovers know.

In her no alteration had taken place. What had caused it in him ? What could be the reason for his keeping away ? Why did he seem to stand in continual expectation of something direful ?

She still kept on. She had only a misty, half-defined hope he would come. He had never before broken a promise made to her. She walked and listened mechanically. Her spirit was busy with the past. It had not yet gained the courage of desperation requisite for looking into the future.

Why had he broken his promise and not come ? Could it be—— ?

She put aside the thought that threatened her, turned her head rapidly from one side to the other to distract her mind, and prevent the swoop her reason had begun to make upon her peace. The house was now nearly a mile behind her, yet no footsteps sounded. A frozen silence held the earth ; darkness stood up like an ebony wall on the moor.

Would he come to-morrow morning early and explain ? Oh, if he would only come and tell her, open his whole mind to her, and put an end to—— !

She stood suddenly still as though the air had grown solid, and she were cased in a shroud of bronze. Neither sound nor light had reached her, but she had trodden on something soft, lying right in the middle of the road.

A moment she stood in numbed horror. No thoughts formed in her mind, her discovery suggested no idea. Her foot rested on something soft, that was all.

With frigid slowness she stooped forward until her hand might touch the ground. Then she stretched it tardily forth, listening with all her nature as she did so. Her hand discovered nothing. She drew it back towards her feet and encountered a garment of some kind. She raised this, stood erect once more listening with all her nature—but no sound came.

Then handling the garment cautiously, as if it were a living thing and a rude touch might kill it, she made out that it wa

but half a garment. . . . Had only one sleeve. . . . The left sleeve. . . . Half a man's coat. . . . Torn from the back of the neck downwards. . . . Two pockets. . . . In the button-hole a flower. . . . In the breast pocket two letters. . . . One letter sealed with wax . . . a small seal. . . . And near the seal two small round spots of wax. . . . Exactly corresponding to two small spots of wax which had fallen on a letter she had sealed two days ago. . . . She sealed no letters but those to John Maine. . . . Her letter to him. . . . The texture of the coat such as he had worn when last she saw him . . . a light summer dust-coat. . . . In the other pocket a small leather case such as she had seen with him. . . . In the case a ribbon such as she had given him.

She replaced the portion of his coat where she had found it, crossed the road, and, stepping slowly and cautiously over the low dyke, stood beside one of the clefts of deep, still water. There was not a ripple washing in the rushes—not a breath of wind stirring. She felt her way to the edge of the water and leaned forward and listened. After a little time she stooped down and softly thrust her hand into the chill, mute waters. She drew her hand out slowly. The drops falling from it made sharp, clear, hissing whis-pers as they touched the surface. Save for this, all was hushed. She rose, regained the road, and, taking up the portion of the coat, walked deliberately in the direction of the house, holding what she had found in both her hands clenched on her bosom. She scarcely breathed. She moved as though she feared by sound to wake something—to wake some hidden spirit that could tell a hideous history; or to wake her own benumbed faculties into active dealings with the terrible discovery she had made.

She did not move her head to the right or to the left. She kept the upper portion of her body rigid. This might be a nightmare, but the waking might be still worse. What when there was light to see? There was a flower in the button-hole. A rose. If it were a red rose, would that be the only red thing on that coat? Hush! Stop all thought. Hold all conjecture. Dismiss all temptations of imagination. Hold the coat fast, and yet not too tightly. Something might be crushed by holding it too tightly, and nothing of his ought to be crushed. Cherish the thing—the relic—no! no! Oh, God! not that thought. But how—?

Hush! Stop all thought. Hold all conjecture. Dismiss all temptations of imagination.

There was no use in going quickly. She would be at the house in time, and then there would be light, and she could see. See what?

Away! away! away with such fancies!

There was no use in hurrying, for nothing could be done—nothing could be done but look at the coat and see if there was a red spot!

Oh, madness! No—no! Down! down with such thoughts!

Marion would be waiting up with a light. With a light! Would it be best to put away what she had found until morning, and then—The daylight would give her more courage to look. The fuller light would be better, for all could then be seen at a glance. But with a candle they should have to turn what she had found over and over, and who could do such an appalling thing as turn that coat over and over? Suppose, as she turned it over in the candle-light, her hand touched something damp, something damp and clammy!

Mercy! oh, mercy. Keep still! keep quiet! what is above the earth there overhead, Hell or Heaven? and Who reigns? and——

Should she now, as she walked along, pass one of her hands down it, and try to discover if there were anything damp? No. If she fell on the road, before she saw the spot, she could not die satisfied in the dark. . .

Here was the house. She would not call Marion, but enter at the open door. What could be the meaning of the sweetbrier having the same smell now as it had a month ago—as it had even an hour ago? Tom must cut down that sweetbrier in the morning.

III.

‘O, Lisette! how long you have been! I thought you would never come.’ Marion had risen, and was standing face to face with her sister. Lisette had paused in the doorway. She still held what she had found in her clenched hands against her bosom. She did not look down at it, although the light of two candles now fell full upon it. She fixed her dilated eyes upon Marion without uttering a word. Marion perceived that something terrible had happened.

‘What is the matter? Have you seen him?’ Marion asked.

‘No, I have found this.’

‘What is that?’ Marion shrank back and covered her eyes.

‘Part of his coat; I found it lying on the road, in the middle of the road. It is torn in two.’

‘His coat torn in two! Did you see him? Did you hear him? Did you find——?’

'No, nothing but the coat. Marion, look! Is there anything red upon it? Can you see anything red upon his coat?'

Marion drew near. Her face had grown deadly pale. She took up a candle and looked.

'No, Lisette. Nothing red. It may be all right. There's a white rose in the button-hole.'

The two now approached the table, and placed the portion of the coat on it, and looked at it cautiously, fearfully. On the outer side there was no stain. Marion turned it over. The inner side was also free from spot.

'Nothing red. Nothing red. But oh, Marion! what can have happened?' She sat down and buried her face in her hands.

Marion proceeded to examine the contents of the pockets.

'There is a leather case, with the ribbon you gave him, in one pocket,' she whispered 'and two letters in the other.' One of the letters is from you to him. The other letter is in a woman's writing also.'

'A woman's writing!' She raised her head and looked at the envelope held by her sister. 'Addressed to him?'

'Yes. But not to his own house. Not to Daisy Farm, but to a house in Barrowleigh.'

'A house in Barrowleigh! Marion, are you sure?'

'Read it yourself.'

Lisette read the superscription 'John Maine, Esq., Cross House, Barrowleigh.' There was no stamp or postmark. It had been sent by a private messenger. He had no relative in the neighbourhood. Daisy Farm was his own place. Cross House was the residence of a friend of his. Why had he changed his place of abode and not told her of it? Or could it be that he was getting letters from some one else addressed to him at a friend's, lest—it was too bad of her to allow such a thought to enter her mind. Besides, what signified letters with that torn coat lying there, that black night abroad, and the dull, weary inability even to wonder what had occurred!

The two sat silent awhile. At length Marion rose and said, 'Let us call Tom and take a lantern and go to the place where you got it. We may find something else that will help to explain.'

'No, no! What do we want with Tom? Let us go by ourselves.'

But the elder sister would not hear of this. So she roused the old gardener, and, without telling him the reason, bade him take a lantern and accompany them. They left on the table what Lisette had found.

In two hours they returned. No discovery had been made.

Traces of a struggle existed in the middle of the road, but, although they went another mile nearer Barrowleigh, nothing new had been seen. There were no red spots, but along each side of the road were two sets of footmarks in the dust, footmarks of men. The men had evidently kept as far apart as possible. The footmarks pointed towards Barrowleigh. There were also in the dust two sets of footmarks pointing towards the Moor House. But these latter had not been made at the same time, for a slight shower which had fallen at eight o'clock that evening had partly defaced the larger marks, while the others were fresh and perfect on the damp dust. It was evident the men had come separately, with some interval of time between the coming of the first and the coming of the second. It was also plain they had gone back towards Barrowleigh together, for at one point, about half a mile from the scene of the struggle, the footmarks approached one another in the middle of the road. Both had stood here and looked back towards the Moor House, for the marks were reversed, but there were then no retrogressive steps.

'He is safe,' said Marion in a low voice, as they stood once more in the parlour. 'He had a quarrel with some man. They met and fought, an ordinary fight, and he got his coat torn in the scuffle, and could not come on here. So they went back to the village together and shook hands at the place where the footprints are close. He will be here to-morrow, Lisette. We must hide the coat, pretend we know nothing of it, destroy it and the letters.'

She took up the letters as she spoke. The fold of paper in the strange envelope was much smaller than the envelope, and as Marion raised it the sheet fell out and opened partly. Lisette's eyes followed it. At one glance she conceived the meaning as if by intuition. This is what was on the small sheet:—

DAISY FARM.—Wednesday Evening.

No matter what happens, I must see you this evening. Come at once, for pity's sake. I have news to tell.

ALICE HENSLOW.

Alice Henslow! Alice Henslow! Oh, had it all come to this? Was this the key to the changed manner, the lurking dread, the cold greetings, the almost formal partings! Alice Henslow, George Henslow's wife! She who had lately run away from her husband, no one knew whither. Was she stopping at John Maine's house? Had it all, all come to this? If when she thrust her hand into that chill water by the side of the road she had found something, could it be worse than this?

Now she knew it was dark. Now she knew the silence of the

tomb held the vacant night. Now she knew the world was a waste, and life for her was over. Marion and she occupied the one room. Nothing need be done to-night. Marion had not read the words on that note. Lisette raised it, replaced it in its envelope, took another envelope from a drawer, wrote on a sheet of paper the words, 'Good-bye for ever.—Lisette;' folded up the sheet, and put it and Alice Henslow's note into the second envelope and closed it.

'Lisette, what did you see in that letter? You have changed wonderfully. Tell me.'

'It was a private letter to John. I don't think he would wish you to know what it contains. I have closed it up and addressed it to him. We must send it to him to-morrow.'

'What did you write to him? Have you asked him to come early to-morrow?'

'No. Let us go to bed.'

In the dark, when she was in bed, she could think of the past. The future—she need think little of it.

IV.

On the evening that note of Alice Henslow's was written, John Maine left the Cross House at eight o'clock and walked to Daisy Farm.

'This is very awkward,' he muttered as he went. 'This evening, of all others. What can she have to tell me? But anyway I shall be back here at nine, and at the Moor House at ten. I hope all may be well there. I hope she has heard nothing.'

He was a young man, about five-and-twenty. He had blue eyes, a fair face and fair moustache. He walked with head and shoulders thrown well back. He was lithe, agile, and of the medium height. Naturally his countenance was frank and open; but now it was clouded and perplexed, and full of vague apprehension.

Before nine he once more found himself at Barrowleigh. His face wore even a graver expression than on setting out. He went into the Cross House, wrote a note and sealed it. The night had fallen, and, as he passed under the infrequent lamps of the village on his way to the Moor, his brows were knit and his mouth squared, like one who had firmly made up his mind to do something which will cost a painful effort, and require resolute courage. As he took the bleak, straight road so familiar to him, he mused:

'Alice's news *was* important—desperately important. So he has found out where she is, where she has been since she fled from him, under whose roof she now lives. If this discovery could

have been averted for a week longer, something might have been done. Now there is no knowing what may occur. All Barrowleigh will hear of it to-morrow; and by the day after the news will be there.' He pointed with impatient anger into the darkness ahead. 'Perhaps he has already written to Lisette's mother. That would be like him. What am I to do? I cannot back out now. I must stand by Alice—and I will.'

It was impossible to see two yards ahead. Indeed, no object presented itself to test the darkness by; the night was Cimmerian.

He walked on rapidly for more than half an hour. No one had passed him, nor had he overtaken anyone, although the rate at which he went was far quicker than the usual one of pedestrians. Suddenly a voice coming from a few feet right in front of him called out his name. He knew that voice, and before he had time to bring himself up he was within arm's length of George Henslow, Alice Henslow's husband.

John Maine could see nothing, but he knew that a much more powerful man, a man taller by a head, stood in his path and barred the way. He could hear the heavy breathing of the other. Before he had time to reply, a strong hand was laid on his arm and Henslow spoke again:

'I knew you would come this way to-night, and as the place is quiet, and I had something to say to you, I thought I'd wait for you. I've been here two hours and have got a wet coat.'

'We shall talk more freely if you let my arm go. I am not accustomed to be held in that way.'

'Do you suppose I am accustomed to talking to men who decoy my wife away from me, and hide her in their houses, under my own nose?'

Maine felt the hand tighten on his arm. With a sudden wrench he sprang backward. The sleeve of the coat slipped, ran over the hand, and remained in Henslow's grasp. With a sharp, strong jerk Henslow drew it towards him, the coat yielded at the collar, and as he seized Maine with his hand he flung behind him half the coat, saying as he did so, 'No, you are not going to run away. You will be cooler without *that*.'

For a while the two men stood face to face breathing hard. Neither could see the other. Still by a kind of instinct the eyes of each were fixed upon the eyes of the other. At length the pause was broken by Maine.

'What have you to say to me?'

'I do not know that there is much to say. There may be something to do.'

No rejoinder.

'This is a very quiet place for a meeting, and there is hardly a quieter place in the world than the bottom of one of these drains at the side of the road.'

'I don't wonder at your thinking of suicide. But I advise you to consider.'

'Thank you. I am thinking of nothing of the kind.'

'Henslow, you're a fool!'

'Maine, you're a villain!'

The gripe on the younger man's arm tightened, and Henslow shook him slowly and significantly.

'Will you listen to me, and try to keep your temper?'

'Go on. I'll keep my temper, and I'll keep *you* until you are done. Don't be long, or I may part suddenly from both.' He swayed the young man slightly in the direction of the drain.

'I know you some years, and you know me. I know your violent temper, I know your suspicious nature, and from my soul I pitied Alice Hill when she married you.'

'Go on!'

muttered Henslow in a warning voice. 'Go on fast. Skip that kind of thing.'

'She and I were friends as children. She and I were friends as woman and man. She and I have never been anything more than friends.'

'Ha-ha-ha! Nice friendship indeed! Go on, John Maine! Go on, my boy!'

There was sardonic incredulity in his tone.

'I had known her father and her mother before you came to this neighbourhood. You never saw her mother. She was dead before you came. Her father, when he was dying last year, married to you though Alice then was, made me promise that I would always be a friend to her.'

'John Maine, my boy, mind what you are saying!'

'I am saying what is true. He knew your violent temper. He knew your suspicious nature. He knew she and you were not living as happily together as you might. He told me he dreaded something like what has happened, for he knew her quick temper, too. He knew her fiery, ungovernable outbursts, and he told me, George Henslow, that she would run away from you, and his prophecy has come true.'

'And did he prophesy she would run away to *you*?'

'She has not run away to me. The night she left your house, or rather the morning she came to Daisy Farm, I think she was a little disturbed in her reason. She spoke wildly and acted wildly; I implored her to go back, I put a horse in the gig to bring her back; but she went down on her knees and begged of me by all that is sacred to let her stay, or, if I would not let her stay, to let her go free, but not to compel her to go home. \

think she was mad. I think she is still not quite responsible for her acts. Poor Alice! I let her stay. I called up old Nellie, gave Alice in charge to her, and from that moment Daisy Farm has been her home, not mine. For I left it then, and have not entered it since, or seen your wife since, except for a few minutes this evening. Take your hand off my arm. I am not accustomed to be held.'

'You're a liar!'

'Take your hand off; I don't like being held.'

'You're a liar! I say.'

With a sudden backward spring the younger man drew the body of Henslow forward; then, throwing downward all the weight of his own body, he succeeded in bending almost to the ground. Seizing an ankle of Henslow's in each hand with a supreme effort of the muscles in the back, he raised the man bodily into the air, two feet off the ground, sprang a pace back, so as to swing the man clear of him, and held the ankles until the head had swept half-way round in the arc, let go, and as the other fell heavily on his back with a sound half-gelatinous, half-metallic, Maine leaped upon him, and, before recovery from the shock was possible, secured his hands behind his back with his braces.

Henslow was half-stunned, and did not struggle. When he recovered, he sat up. Maine assisted him to his feet, and for a long time neither spoke.

'Henslow,' at length began the younger man, 'don't allow your temper to lead you into any more trouble. Surely I owe you no grudge personally. She is one of the best women in all the world. I know her failing. It was the terror of her parents. When I heard you and she were to be married, I felt inclined to come between you.'

'But you waited until after we had been married, you cowardly scoundrel. Untie my hands! Loose my hands, I say! or I shall throw myself upon you and grind you to death on the road.'

He struggled wildly: to no purpose.

'I did not come between you and her. Your own shameful violence caused all the evil. Do you know what she raved of that night she came? Do you know the bar you have placed between her and you? Do you know what made her fly from your house that night? Or were you so carried away by your fatal temper as to be unconscious of what you did, unable to recall what you have done?'

The bound man shuddered slightly, but made no reply.

'She was a sweet girl, Henslow, when she married you; and if you had not an infirmity such as hers, if you had been a rior?

gentle man, you might have stolen the dangerous fire out of her nature. But you two were fire and tow. You fanned one another into violence, and in the end, on that dreadful night, you so far forgot your manhood as to raise your hand and str——'

'No, no! not *that*! I did not. Don't say that. Maine, you know my curse. Forget what I have said. Forget and forgive. I am sorry, deeply sorry, for all that has happened here to-night. I will do anything you wish, I will make any apology you like. I swear to be a better, a kinder husband to Alice, if she will only come back to me. I'm not hard-hearted, but when my temper is roused I see nothing, hear nothing, count no chances, remember nothing. Do what you will with me, Maine, but don't tell me I *did* that. Don't unman me for ever. Say you wanted only to frighten me into better behaviour.'

Maine was mute.

'Oh, this is the worst of all! Maine, if the suspicions which were in my mind when I lay in wait for you here had proved true I should have killed you, and then myself. But I would not harm her. Now, if what you hint is true there is no cure. Nothing can undo a blow. I am everlastingly in the wrong. I could easily bear the thought of dying, but dying will not undo this. Dying will not undo this!'

The younger man untied the hands, and the two turned back towards the village. 'I can go to the Moor House in the morning,' thought Maine. 'I can explain all and get rid of my hideous burden.' As they walked on at different sides of the road, he said aloud when they had gone some distance, 'I wrote a letter to you to-night before leaving Barrowleigh. Fortunately it is in the right pocket of my coat. Will you have it now?'

'Yes. Maine, you are a good man. Will you shake hands with me?'

'Most gladly.'

Each crossed half-way, they met and shook hands. Henslow held the other's hand a long while. 'You were going to see her to-night—Lisette?' they both turned round.

'Yes.'

'You are a noble-hearted fellow, Maine, and I am a pitiful wretch, a heartless scoundrel.'

'Hush! don't say such things. All may be well yet. I will tell you the contents of that letter. When I learned from Alice that you had discovered her hiding-place, I made up my mind to two things—to send her away to some distant place in the morning, and to see you in the course of the day.'

‘What did you want to see me about? Don’t spare me. Tell me all.’

‘I would not then have thought it wise for her to go home, after being so long away, until something like an explanation had been made, something like a reconciliation effected. Henslow, if you only could make up your mind to see her and treat her tenderly at the meeting, I think all might be forgiven. I know, after the horrible lesson you have been taught, you will give way less than of old.’

‘Maine, you do not know how I love her still. We have quarrelled, and when I lose my temper, nothing that is good remains with me; but if this could only be made up! If she would only forgive and come home!’

‘I think she will.’

He pressed the other’s hand passionately, and sobbed. Then they separated, and, keeping different sides of the road, walked back with few more words to Barrowleigh.

V.

WHEN Marion awoke the next morning, it was broad day. She looked towards her sister’s bed. It was vacant. In sore alarm she arose, dressed herself hastily, and sought Lisette in the house. No trace of her sister was to be found. Where could she be? Why had she got up and gone out stealthily?

She went into the garden, and, opening the gate, looked along the road. No figure was in view either on road or moor. The clouds which obscured the heavens last night had floated away, and the morning sun blazed high in the east, flooding the level landscape with glory. Plovers called to one another, flies in brilliant mail buzzed and flashed hither and thither, the two placid clefts of water reaching away towards the sun seemed like discarded swords of gigantic nature lying peacefully out of use.

But where was Lisette?

Marion stood and listened. Presently, she thought she heard sobs, proceeding from an arbour beside the house. She listened again. There was no doubt some one: Lisette was sobbing in that arbour. Oh, poor broken-hearted Lisette! Poor afflicted sister!

She hastened towards the arbour. As she approached there were sounds of movements, and, ere she gained the threshold, a pale, dark-eyed girl came to the entrance, and beckoned to Marion. The latter stretched out her hands, and cried as she drew near:

‘Such a fright as I got! I did not know where to find you. Why did you go without calling me?’

and I could not sleep. I am so glad, Marion, looked at her tearful face. 'So glad! Have news? news.' They were now standing a little outside do you get it? Who brought it?' overed a man's voice from inside; and, with a look grate- tterance, John Maine stepped out on the sunlit garden knew he was safe, Lisette.' And he has told me all. I may not tell anyone, for it is not safe. But, Marion, kiss John. You must kiss him. I will be jealous. Kiss John. I have been crying for happiness, no wonder, after that night.' On the lips or the cheek?' he asked. On the lips, of course.' Then I'll kiss some one else after.' He did what he was bidden, he did what he had threatened. In the struggle preceding the latter, she whispered, 'You have had many for before breakfast.' Then I'll stop for breakfast. Come along. I want to begin it,' he whispered back.

RICHARD DOWLING.

Watching and Praying.

On the watch-tower, grim and gray,
High above the rock-bound bay,
Where the sea-birds scream and soar,
Where the storm-lashed billows roar,
Pale with fear a maiden stands,
Peering 'o'er the foam-flaked sands.

There, where clouds loom black as night,
And the crested waves gleam white,
Waiting for the flowing tide,
Tacks a yacht from side to side ;
Beating bravely 'gainst the gale,
With lowered mast and shortened sail.

Swells the tide above the bar,
Speeds the white sail from afar ;
See it from the surges spring,
Like a sea-bird on the wing ;
While from haven and from shore,
Shouts of welcome ring and roar.

Down the watch-tower's rugged stair
Trips a gentle maiden fair ;
No more tears are in her eyes,
To her lover's arms she flies,
Murmuring low, ' My prayers for thee
Were stronger than the mighty sea.'



WATCHING.

A Gossip about Curling.

Of a' the games that e'er I saw,
Man, callant, laddie, birkie, wean,
The dearest, far aboon them a',
Was aye the witching channel stane.—*The Eltrick Shepherd.*

As most Englishmen know that curling is a sort of 'bowls' played upon ice, and most Scots have seen it played, we shall say little in this brief sketch descriptive of a game that owes so much of the undoubted fascination it exercises over a host of enthusiastic devotees to its accompaniments. We propose rather to gather together a few stray notes and anecdotes of curling and curlers, and the feats done on the 'Transparent Board,' since the Scotch took to this manly and invigorating game.

But when was that? Endless disputes have raged about the origin of the sport: papers have been written to prove, on etymological and other grounds, that it was, and that it was *not*, introduced into Scotland by the Flemish emigrants who came over towards the end of the sixteenth century. All the words in the technical language of the game are of Low country origin; but the 'Noes' thought nothing of that, especially as one waggish enthusiast of their party had, they thought, triumphantly settled the native origin of the game by the lines in 'Ossian,' telling how 'Amid the circle of stones, Swaran bends at the stone of might.' He, however, was completely eclipsed by a poet of the old 'Scot's Magazine,' who tells us, in many verses, how

Auld Daddy Scotland sat ae day,
Bare-legged on a snawy brae,
His brawny arms wi' cauld were blae,
The wind was snelly blawing;

when to him comes the king of gods, rebuking him for his grumbling against the weather:

Quo' Jove, and gied his kilt a heeze,
'Fule carle! what gars you grunt and wheeze,
Get up! I'll get an exercise
To het your freezing heart wi'.
I'll get a cheery, heartsome game,
To send through a' the soul a flame,
Pit birr and smeddum in the frame,
And set the blude a-dinling;

and forthwith told him all the mysteries of our game.

Where doctors so differ, we shall not attempt to decide; but it is certain that no authentic mention of the game occurs in any work till about the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the Carse of Gowrie, indeed, there is a model of a curling stone in silver, which is played for annually by several parishes. Tradition says that it was given as a challenge trophy by King James IV., himself a keen curler, during Perkin Warbeck's visit to his Court. If it was so presented, then certainly this merry monarch must have omitted to pay his silversmith for it, as in the accounts of his Lord Treasurer, though there are many entries relating to the king's other games of golf, football, 'cach' (tennis), 'langbowlis,' 'kiles' (skittles), and many others, not a word is said about curling; and it is quite clear James was not a keen player, or else some expense would have been incurred in connection with it.

The unfortunate Henry, Lord Darnley, amused himself during the severe winter (1566-7) he spent in exile at the little town of Peebles on the Tweed by curling on a flooded meadow, now part of the clergyman's glebe. He was as fond of this game as was his wife, Queen Mary of Scots, of golf and pall-mall—amusements she liked so much that she put a weapon into the hands of her accusers by playing them in the fields at Seton a few weeks after Darnley's tragic end at the Kirk o' Fields.

Camden in his '*Britannia*,' published in 1607, speaks of this game as if it were well known then. He mentions that 'To the east of the mainland [of Orkney] lies Copinsha, a little isle, but very conspicuous to seamen, in which, and in several other places of this country, are to be found in great plenty excellent stones for the game called curling;' though he was mistaken in calling them 'excellent,' as, upon trial, that great authority upon this game, Sir Richard Brown of Lochmaben, pronounces them 'not worth a rap.'

Sir William Scott, younger, of Harden—a member of that noted family of Border raiders one of whom is the hero of the 'Mickle-mouthed Meg' story, when he, a captive, had set before him the alternative of the rope or wedding his captor's ugly daughter, and wisely chose the latter, thereby getting an excellent wife—having got into trouble for his connection with Jerviswoode's and Lord Tarras's conspiracy, and their correspondence with Russell, Shaftesbury, and the 'Carolina Company,' we are told by Lord Fountainhall in his gossipy '*Decisions*' that a party of the forces were sent out to apprehend him, but that a William Scot of Langhope, getting notice of their coming, went and told Harden of it, 'as he was playing at the curling with Riddell of Haining and others.' It was said Harden was so engrossed in his game, and so unwilling to spoil it by leaving,

that he narrowly escaped capture, and had to ride hard before he baffled his pursuers; but Fountainhall does not bear this out, as he makes Harden leave the ice at once.

About the same time an unfortunate Bishop of Orkney got into a scrape: his 'process,' says Baillie, in his Letters, 'came first before us: he was a curler on the Sabbath day;' a libel, as it turned out, on the worthy Bishop, as he neither curled on Sunday nor in Orkney, 'for the Bishop, like other dignitaries of modern times, resided anywhere but in his see.' Many amusing stories are told of such Sunday curling. Long ago it was believed that this was the favourite amusement of fairies on a fine frosty Sunday afternoon, and no doubt this helped as much as anything else to keep superstitious youngsters off the ice, lying there before them temptingly as only forbidden fruit and Sunday ice can. In an early number of 'Blackwood,' a good story is told of 'a pedlar, well known in Dumfriesshire, whose love of gain was generally considered as an overmatch for his conscience, but who was withal very fond of the amusement of curling, who chanced to pass Loch Etterick, with his pack on his back, upon a Sabbath morning. The ice was evidently in fine order, and there were a few curling stones lying on the banks of the loch, with which the shepherds of those mountainous districts had been in the habit of occasionally amusing themselves. Watty hesitated a little. . . . On the one hand there was the "Lord's Day" and the sin and so forth: but then, on the other, appeared the stones, lying quite ready; the fine board of ice, together with the absence, at present, of all human eye. In a word, the result of this deliberation was an advance made by Watty into the middle of the loch, where he quietly deposited his pack, and had recourse to a pair or two of the best stones he could select. Everybody who understands the game knows quite well how Watty would proceed. He would just set a stone on each tee, and then try to hit it off. The sport, no doubt, was imperfect without a companion, and so Watty felt it to be. He gave a glance or two to the surrounding hills, as if half desirous that "Will Crosby," a rattling, reckless body, might heave in sight and bear a hand, but there was no human creature within view. The play became tiresome, and Watty, in order to rest and resolve upon future measures, seated himself quite at his ease upon his pack. No sooner had he done this, however, than, with a boom and a roar that made the ice shake and sink beneath him, an invisible and consequently a fairy curling stone came full drive against Watty's shins. The instinct of self-preservation restored Watty immediately to his legs, and, in the course of a certain number of hasty strides, to the adjoining bank. This was doubt-

less a visitation upon him for his profanation of the Sabbath. What was to be done? The pack was in the power, at least within the dominion, of the "Fairy Queen," and to contest the possession upon her own element seemed little short of madness. At this instant another fairy stone made its presence audible, and Watty, unable any longer to resist his terrors, fled. He fled to a shieling about four miles off, and with the assistance of Will Crosby, whose faith was not much stronger than Watty's, possessed himself *next morning* of his lost goods. The story I have often heard him tell with a serious countenance; nor have I the smallest doubt that he believed every word which he said.'

About the beginning of last century the good folks of Edinburgh used to curl on the Nor' Loch; and so highly was the game esteemed, that the Town Council used to march in a body to the ice, headed by a band. When this loch was drained, the headquarters of curling in the east were shifted to Duddingstone Loch in the shadow of Arthur's Seat; and under the auspices of this and many other clubs the game was immensely improved and turned into a highly scientific exercise, instead of the rough and clumsy amusement it had been in its early years, when it bore a strong resemblance to quoits on ice,—indeed, in many places it was called 'Kuting'—and was played with 'channel stanes' picked out of the bed of a stream, and roughly shaped into an oblong form, with a niche to admit the points of the player's fingers. In December 1830, a kuting stone of this kind, bearing the initials I. M. and the date 1611, was dug out of the foundations of an old house in Strathallan; and the Duddingstone Society possess several like it, which were fished out of Linlithgow Loch early in this century.

The curlers of Lochmaben in Dumfries have long been celebrated for their excellence. They have given a phrase to the game, 'Soutering,' which has puzzled philologists to explain before now. Soutering means defeating an opposing party in so hollow a way that they stand 'love' when the victors are 'game.' In Lochmaben there was a rink of seven players, all shoemakers—Scoticè, *souters*—by trade, who were so expert that, not only did they conquer all comers, but often without allowing their opponents to score a single shot; hence the phrase. On the same loch, during the French war, there was another rink, headed by Sir James Brown of Colstoun, famed all over curling Scotland as the 'Invincible Board of Lochmaben.' Many are the feats recorded of these doughty champions; so marvellous was the skill of Deacon Jardine, chief of the 'Souters,' that he could with his stone thread a needle! he attached with a piece of shoemaker's wax two needles to the side of two curling stones, just the width of the

one he played with apart; then upon two stones in front, similarly apart, and in the line of direction, having affixed two 'birses'—bristles—he played his stone so accurately that, in grazing through the 'port' or opening between the stones, it would impel the birses forward through the eyes of the needles. Unique as was this feat, it has often been rivalled in difficulty by delicate shots of other curlers. There have been instances of a curling stone being thrown a mile upon the ice. Sir Richard Brown says that in his day there were many alive who could throw a stone across 'the Kirk Loch,'—one of the many lakes at Lochmaben,—'a feat not much short of the above.' Once a celebrated player of Tinwald, named Lawrie Young, challenged the Lochmaben curlers to a trial of strength. Their president stepped forward, and, taking his stone, threw it with such strength across the 'Mill Loch' that it jumped off the brink upon the other side, and tumbled over upon the grass. 'Now,' said he to Lawrie, 'go and throw it back again; I will then confess that you are too many for us.'

Captain H. Clapperton, R.N.—an African traveller of some repute sixty years ago—used to play with an enormous mass of granite, known far and wide as 'the Hen.' This rough stone weighed about seventy pounds; and yet such a strong man was Clapperton that he not only played some capital shots with it, but could hold it out at arm's length, and whirl it about as if it were a feather. An uncle of his used even a heavier stone, because, as he said, no other curler on the Lochmaben ice could throw it but himself. These were roughly-shaped stones almost as they were when found, and would never be allowed on a rink nowadays.

One of the Dukes of Athole, very fond both of curling and skating, suggested a game in which both were combined. The skater, armed with a long pole, impelled his curling stone with it; but though it was described as 'an elegant mode—making a highly interesting game,' it never took either with curlers or skaters, never at any time best of friends on the ice.

At a time when the game was not as fashionable with the Scottish nobility as it is nowadays, 'Archibald the Handsome,' the ninth Duke of Hamilton, was a great patron of curling. He often headed rinks from Hamilton in contests with other parishes, and took the keenest interest in the 'spiel.' Once in the 'dear years,' when meal *was* meal, the fate of a game depended on a critical shot being played; his Grace called out to the player about to attempt it, 'Now, John, if you take the shot and strike away the winner, your mother shanna want meal a' the winter—I'll send her a boll'—a prize John had the satisfaction, both as a curler and a son, of winning.

When the game is over, for the day, victors and vanquished retire together to the inn, where they allay the enormous appetites engendered by the keen frosty air and their healthy exercise. 'Beef and greens' is the invariable fare—'curlers' fare'—washed down by copious tumblers of toddy, under the influence of which the battles of the day are fought over again by voluble tongues; old jokes—venerable, but all the better liked for that—are retold, and all is mirth and jollity. Strange are the pranks sometimes suggested by the too potent toddy, and many are the stories told of them: here is one that takes us back to the ice again, but by night this time:

A large party of Kilmarnock curlers had been playing all day in a match, which they had won. After dinner, while the social glass was being drained, it was proposed that they should again repair to the ice; the hint met with universal approbation. It was about eleven o'clock, and they had to walk a mile in the country to reach the loch. The night was very dark, but a lantern at each tee head guided the player in his delivery; 'the stone,' says the poetic chronicler of this game, 'having left the hand, was heard booming, unseen, along the ice, "startling the night's dull ear," its destination unknown until it dashed among the others around the tee. The stilly calmness of the dark night—the roar of the stones in their progress along the ice—and the screaming and fluttering of flocks of wild water-fowl, startled from the margin of the loch by the unusual intrusion on their haunts, formed a scene of interest and novelty. In these strange circumstances the game was continued with the utmost enthusiasm and hilarity, till long past "the wee short hour ayont the twal;" and ere the party finally separated "grey morning, like a warder on his tower," was beginning to smile upon the snow-clad world.'

Our space will not permit us to say anything of the 'Curling Court,'—a mock tribunal—a secret society, and the scene of frequent 'High Jinks' like those of Counsellor Pleydell; nor of the songs and song-writers of our game, nor even to tell of the lady curlers who have before now adorned a rink and played a capital game. It is to be hoped, what with Gamgee's 'real ice' and the new patent 'imitation,' that this excellent game will soon become as popular south of the Tweed as it is north of that river.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.]

CHAPTER XXXI.

SLIPPED.

WITH a great many affectations of hybridity, Miss Forbes had the one redeeming masculine quality of magnanimity. She did not judge of matters as they affected her own interests, and praise or blame according as she was well served or put to inconvenience. Unselfish herself, she knew that each man must make his own life in the best way in which he can, and that the capacity for sacrifice is not granted to everyone. So that when Bob Rushton came to her and, with many servile pullings of his forelock and much of the awkwardness of shame in his manner, announced the fact that he was going to quit Tower for Owlett—Mr. Smith having offered less work and better wage, and the old pain in his chest just now pretty bad—she would not let herself be annoyed, for all that she thought it ungrateful in Bob and unneighbourly in Mr. Smith. She understood it all, she said contemptuously—despising the man's weakness for its own sake, though not disposed to quarrel with it for the effect on herself personally; and understanding it—why, she let it go.

But, if she was masculine in her solid layer of magnanimity, she was feminine in her froth of talk, and before the week was out had discussed the transfer of service with everyone in the place. For her own part, she said that, although she had been glad to save thus far from ruin a poor shiftless wretch who could not stand upright of himself, yet she could not understand how any gentleman, the father of a family and the owner of property, should run the risk of offending a good friend for the sake of patronising an idle thief who was only too well off as it was, and who would never do himself or anyone else any credit; and she wondered at Mr. Smith's folly even more than she condemned Bob's ingratitude. If she wanted to be revenged on the former—which, heaven knew, she did not!—she would be soon enough, she said. She had found Bob slippery and so would Mr. Smith; and she doubted if he would keep as tight a hand over the rogue as she had done. But there, that was enough!—she wished him joy of his bargain,

which for herself was a good riddance of bad rubbish. She supposed that Mr. Smith, who had seen so much of life, knew what he wanted when he had got it, and could manage his own business without her help; and at least, said the rough old kindly creature, talking off the froth and coming down to the solid layer, the poor fellow would be well taken care of; and perhaps his chest was bad, though he did not look like it.

She said all this in like substance, if varying form, to everyone in the place; and the chances are that she would have gone on saying it had she not heard something which effectually closed her mouth and stopped her speculations. It was only one of Miss Aurora's random shots—but it told. They had been calling on Mrs. Lucraft, discussing the whole affair after the manner of gossips with starved dramatic instincts, when, as they were driving home, Miss Aurora said, giggling:

‘Diny! how funny it would be if Mr. Smith had done something wrong too, and been in the same prison with Robert; and that is why he took him!’

Miss Dinah turned pale and grew quite grave and silent when her sister said this. She forgot to call her a little angel or to compliment her on her sharpness; but from that day she said no more about Bob Rushton and Owlett, and pointedly avoided the subject when others would have discussed it.

But the world talked if she did not, and Grantley Bourne was much exercised concerning the whole affair. People instanced all the honest men with rheumatism and bad backs in the neighbourhood, and asked, with sneers, if Mr. Smith, or any wrong-headed philanthropist of his stamp, would have taken them and given them a snug berth like Bob's? And was it just to pet a man because he had been a rogue, while leaving to starve, if they liked it, the virtuous who had never got into trouble at all? It was a premium on vice and a penalty laid on virtue, they said, waxing warm; and Mr. Smith was a bad citizen, a bad neighbour, and a very doubtful Christian for his pains, and so they would like to tell him to his face. But no one ever did—just as no one ever said out boldly that things looked odd though many hinted so—at the first in a whisper and behind close-shut doors, but day by day growing louder and the chink wider.

The Smiths having as much as they could manage at home, without going abroad for complications, let the world talk its fill, taking no heed of broad hints or subtle insinuations when people called for the purpose of easing the strain, under pretence of asking after the character of this man or that maid—all the servants having given warning, and it being a matter of public

history why. Had it not been for the wedding, which absorbed so much of the public interest of the moment, things would have grown hotter sooner than they did. But even the dramatic instinct in country places is limited; and when the biggest sponge is filled, it can take up no more.

Suddenly Miss Forbes determined that she would go to Owlett, to say what she had it on her mind to say. She had not been there since she had received Baby's chance guess like a revelation directly given, and the buzz of suspicious conjectures, growing gradually louder and clearer, determined her to take a line which when taken she would stick to.

This day—the day before the wedding—when she came she was noticeably quiet and sympathetic; for her, quite ladylike and tender. She talked of a great many indifferent things, and then she turned the conversation on Bob, in spite of Mrs. Smith's efforts to avoid the subject; speaking of him with true womanly compassion, if a little loftily, as belongs by right to one of rigid virtue and snow-white morals when dealing with a slippery varlet as parti-coloured as a pie.

And at the end of her speech she said, looking full into Mr. Smith's disturbed face:

'Well, I agree with the Bible, Mr. Smith; and when a man has done wrong and repents I am not ashamed to be on the side of the angels, and to rejoice with them over his salvation. If a friend of mine had gone to the bad, and repented and become a reformed character, I would stand by him cost what it might; and I would despise the soft-boned Christian who would be afraid of doing the same.'

'Yes, I should have expected as much from you, Miss Forbes,' answered Mrs. Smith with her wonderful tranquillity; while Edmund, weak, fluttered, abashed by his very embarrassment, confirmed her suspicion, and made her feel sure that Baby's random shaft had struck home to the very centre.

'So if ever the day should come when any friend of mine should want a substantial background,' continued Miss Forbes with suggestive warmth, 'there is one at Tower which will not give way in a hurry and may serve at a pinch better than none at all—don't you see?'

Which was exactly what they did not want to be made to see, kindly meant as her words were now, and useful as her offer might be in the future.

This broad hint of service to sinners properly repentant and decorously rehabilitated, was given not only on the very day before the wedding, but also on that following on Derwent's high-

handed castigation of Bob, and while Bob, who had not come home all night, was drinking himself blind and mad at the King's Head

'Oh!' said Mrs. Smith with a passionate kind of plaintiveness 'if only we could prevent Muriel from being bridesmaid at this wedding!'

She had not been used to be either passionate or plaintive, no to content herself with wishing in place of commanding, as was more her natural right; but circumstances had been growing too strong for her of late, and she was not able to hold the reins as heretofore. While the children were young, and no other influence had conflicted with hers, things had been easy and she had governed them as she would; now, since the return of the father and the blossoming of these young loves, all manner of foreign strains had intermingled with and complicated her action, and the task of regulating their lives had become as difficult as it was disappointing.

'It would be a pity now that things have gone so far,' said Edmund, true to his temporising policy as well as to his natural kindness.

'It would be better,' she answered. 'We are on the edge of the precipice, Edmund, and we must face our position before long.'

'Perhaps not,' he said weakly. 'Miss Forbes might have meant nothing special. Perhaps it was a mere coincidence, and we are frightening ourselves for nothing.'

'I think not,' she answered.

'I am sure that Rushton would not betray me,' he continued his speech, like his conviction, gathering force from its own expression. 'What would he get by it? I am certain of it—no!—impossible!'

'We cannot be certain, dear,' she argued gently. 'He may have betrayed you unintentionally—by a chance hint that would be enough for a sharp woman as she is to work out.'

'He would be cautious for his own sake,' he said.

'No, unfortunately; he has nothing to lose. His story is too well known; and you saw for yourself how Derwent irritated him yesterday—how he has irritated him indeed ever since he came.'

'That boy of yours, Constance, has been made too much of. He takes too much on himself—a great deal,' said Edmund petulantly. 'He would have done better under a man's influence—under my care.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Smith simply, and innocent of sarcasm.

He flushed and then turned pale.

'It is scarcely kind to say so,' he answered, tears coming into his eyes. 'It is rather a bitter reproach to make to me!'

She kissed him gently.

‘It was not meant,’ she said soothingly. ‘Do you not feel sure of that, my beloved?’

‘It sounded harsh,’ he answered with a sigh; but he returned her kiss with one of forgiveness, and the understanding between them was that the offence was condoned. After a short silence Mrs. Smith said:

‘Bob Rushton went away yesterday evening, and has not been home since.’

Edmund started.

‘Why did you not tell me before?’ he cried.

‘I knew only just now—just before Miss Forbes came, else I would; but it complicates matters not a little, and makes me more than ever anxious to prevent, even at the last hour, Muriel’s share in to-morrow.’

‘This once can do no harm,’ he pleaded; but he looked scared at the news of Bob’s disappearance, as if he too felt it to be the first throb before the earthquake that was to overwhelm all.

‘It is just this once which will do all the harm,’ she answered. ‘We know what has to come, dear—we must look it in the face, Edmund; and as Muriel’s marriage is an impossibility—we must never forget that!—it is unkind to her, and dishonourable to the others, to let her accept a false position like this of to-morrow.’

‘Why do you speak of it so much? I would like to forget it and be happy, and you will not let me!’ he cried with a sudden burst of petulant despair.

‘Yes, forget it always—always,’ she said tenderly; ‘but not in this one case of our children’s marriages. We must remember it then—never lose sight of it, Edmund!’

‘But how can we alter things now?’ he argued. ‘The wedding is to-morrow, and it is too late to rearrange matters. We cannot work back; and things must take their own course.’

‘With my will, no!’ she said.

‘Well! do your will, and make everyone unhappy!’ he said, turning away.

That beloved wife and faithful counsellor of his bored him by her insistence. It was both cruel and unnecessary.

‘Muriel will be more unhappy if she is suffered to hope and believe unchecked,’ she answered very quietly and very steadily.

‘Tell me, at least, what do you propose to do?’ he asked, always in the same tone of offence and annoyance.

‘There is only one thing to do,’ she answered in a low voice; ‘if we do not tell them, then we must tell her, and leave her to choose between love and honour.’

‘Good God! you are mad!’ he cried, in strong agitation.

'It has to come,' she said distinctly.

The room in which they sat was on the ground floor, looking over the lawn to the tulip tree. Muriel passed lightly across the grass, singing softly to herself. She was so happy, there was nothing for it but to sing as children laugh and young lambs skip. Her mother went to the window and drew up the blind, always kept lowered on that side.

'My dear, I want you,' she said; and Muriel, with a happy 'Yes, mamma,' turned into the house.

'For mercy's sake, Constance—for the love of God—don't!' pleaded her husband in agony.

'Ah, my love! my love! What can I do for you—what can I do for the best?' she answered with infinite tenderness and pain; her heart sore for love, but her soul resolute against dishonour.

'Yes, mamma?' said Muriel's fresh voice at the door, and in another moment the girl was by her father's side. He had held out his hand to her lovingly as she came in; the poor mother had turned away her face.

'Muriel,' said Mrs. Smith, after a moment's pause; 'have you sufficient faith in me to do what I wish without asking why?'

Muriel's light heart grew heavy. A few months ago she would have answered cheerfully 'Yes,' and would have added to her cheerfulness pleasure in the thought that her obedience carried with it sacrifice. Now it was different. What she might be willing to suffer on her own account she could not promise for her lover; and all that her mother was likely to ask of her would include Arthur's sacrifice with her own.

'Will you?' repeated her mother.

'You know how much I love you, mamma,' said the girl.

'Yes,' said her mother tenderly; 'and that makes me sure of you now. I want you to give up being bridesmaid to-morrow.'

'Oh, mamma!' she cried, covering her face.

Mrs. Smith looked at her with a strange mixture of pain and resolution. The sympathy of sex made her appear harder than she was, for, like Mrs. Brown, her creed was that women are sent into the world to suffer because of man—it is always Iphigenia who must be sacrificed that the gods may be propitious to Agamemnon; and here at home, among themselves, she and Muriel must give themselves that Edmund might be happy.

'I am grieved to disappoint you, darling,' she said still so tenderly. 'But I have my reasons.'

'You see there is Arthur,' murmured Muriel shyly. Her lover's name was by no means a household word between herself and her mother.

'Yes, there is Arthur, mamma,' repeated Edmund, holding a brief for Muriel.

'I cannot explain my reasons; but even Mr. Machell's pleasure is less important than they are,' said Mrs. Smith.

'Dear mamma!' said Muriel with a little sob.

She loved her mother, and had ever been as little disobedient as selfish; but, as she said, there was Arthur to be considered too.

'It is very hard on her,' said Edmund almost in tears.

'It is better,' was the mother's answer.

'Mamma, you know best, but it will look so strange! It will be such a disappointment to Miss de Paumelle. Lady Machell will be so angry—everything will have to be rearranged. Must it be?' asked Muriel tremulously.

'I have thought of all that; still, in spite of all, it is best; best for your father,' said Mrs. Smith slowly.

'Oh, no, not for me. Wife, let her go!' cried Edmund.

'If it is for poor papa—dear papa—of course I must and will,' the girl said lovingly.

'No, no, my darling, I will not accept the sacrifice! No! I will not allow it! You must go! Constance, let her go!'

Mrs. Smith passed her hand over her eyes.

'My task is very heavy,' she said, the nearest to a reproach that she had ever uttered against her husband.

'Mamma, dear, I will do as you like!' cried Muriel, her faithful heart mindful of the years that had been. 'You are the best judge for me and everyone, and I will do as you tell me I ought.'

'I thought I had not lost you!' said Mrs. Smith with a strange sigh of relief, when, just as the poor girl was feeling as if her heart would break outright, the Machell carriage drove up to the door, and Lady Machell, with Arthur, came to carry off Muriel and Derwent to dine and spend the last evening of the old family life that would ever be spent at Machells.

'The last family gathering under the old conditions,' said Arthur with his fresh smile and manly confidence; 'but not the last of all.'

'Certainly not,' said my lady graciously, in her character of Ahasuerus.

'It will be very pleasant for you, Muriel,' said Edmund, before his wife could speak. 'Go now, dear; do not keep them waiting.'

Muriel turned to her mother.

'May I, mamma?' she asked.

Her father laughed.

'Of course you may!' he said with affected gaiety. 'We are not quite such tyrants as that Lady Machell!'

‘You hear what your father says, my dear,’ was Mrs. Smith’s rejoinder; but she was careful not to give her own consent. In the distress of the moment and the destruction that was coming on, it was some slight consolation to feel that she had discharged her own conscience if she had not arrested the course of events—that she could look them all boldly in the face and say, ‘I did my best to the last, and was overruled.’ And honour, however barren, is better than consenting to evil, as it is nobler to die for the right than to live softly with shame.

So the two young people went to Machells; and for all that Wilfrid, the ostensible cause of the gathering, was absent and did not appear save just at the last, enjoyed the passing time as if there had been no past and was to be no future.

But while they were as happy and secure as youth and love could make them, Bob Rushton, at the King’s Head, was laying the train to the mine which was to explode and ruin all.

He had been drinking all yesterday evening and all to-day, and George Romer had been in and out the sanded parlour where he sat, drinking too for company. But not so much as not to see that here was a track which, if followed up, might lead to queer places. He had plied Bob with questions as to the why and wherefore he had left Tower for Owlett, and had touched again and again on what was public property, but also what he saw was the sore point with the returned convict—young Mr. Derwent’s conduct towards him. Till at last Bob, who had grown tipsy, angry, unreflecting, and confidential, said in a thick loud voice:

‘Yes, that young Mr. Smith—that Mr. Derwent, as he calls hisself—he thinks, don’t he now, as I am dirt under his feet? not good enough to wipe his shoes on, for that little matter of trouble as I got into? And who is his father, I should like to know? Yes!’ said Bob striking the table with drunken force, while the Manor coachman pressed close to hear what was coming; ‘who is he? Well, then, I’ll tell you, master—he was working carpenter at the same bench with me at Bindwood;—in for horse-racing and forgery—and had fifteen years of it, as I’m a living man!’

CHAPTER XXXII.

FROM A CLEAR SKY.

No one in or about Grantley Bourne would ever forget the wedding-day of Wilfrid Machell with Jemima Brown de Paumelle. In the first place, the weather was of ideal beauty—that delicious English weather of early September, when the golden softness of

summer is touched with the ruddy strength of autumn, more beautiful than the tender flush of May or the luscious warmth of July. Then the wedding itself was pretty in all its circumstances. The road from Paumelle House to the church was spanned with arches and decorated with fancy columns of green boughs and showy flowers; flags were flying from every point where flags could fly; and the village school children in white and blue, and the band of the regiment quartered in the neighbourhood, in their gold and scarlet, made a kind of triumphal procession that heralded the long string of carriages containing the wedding party and their friends. The church, like the arches and the columns, was as gay with flags as a city banqueting hall, and embowered in flowers and greenery like a harvest-home; and the altar-cloth of white and gold, given by old Brown for the occasion, was in itself a marvel of art needlework, and really combined wealth and social arrangements with the symbols of the Christian religion in a manner as ingenious as it was admirable.

Then, again, the dresses were pretty; and, this being what is called 'a white wedding,' they showed to advantage against the masses of colour in the church, of which the gold-starred crimson carpet was not the least noticeable. The six bridesmaids, all pretty girls, were dressed like brides themselves; save that here and there, to mark the difference, faint 'washes' of pale pink, like the reflected shadows thrown by monthly roses in the sunshine, and a few pale pink roses in their wreaths, marked them off as witnesses only, not principals; while the bride, in the traditional splendour of her state, was, if not lovely in herself, yet good to look at from the point of view of perfect millinery;—which counts for something in a pageant.

The married women gathered to the side, lining the aisle and filling the seats, were the traditional bed of flowers; among whom Lady Machell was the most conspicuous, as, true to the style which poverty had imposed and pride retained, she towered above them all like a queen in her long flowing straight-cut black velvet gown, with a few of the family diamonds, redeemed, fastening her lace draperies, as her contribution to the animation of the scene.

As for the men, poor souls, this is the one day of all their masterful lives when, pushed from their place of power and thrust ignominiously into the back ground, they are made to look inferior and to feel foolish. As constituents of a pageant they are nowhere—or at the best are but foils; and as circumstances of the ceremony they are, though necessary, more humiliated than honoured. In the present instance however, though it was the woman's day, Wilfrid was too grave and strong-headed, Arthur too conscio-

his place as a natural ruler, to look silly or to feel inferior. They were Machells; and in that word was expressed everything characteristic of the men of a dominant race.

This wedding, if it roused just the natural amount of regretful jealousy of the present in the younger brother, made him also proud and happy in the prospect of the future. If not his own drama, it was the rehearsal, and seemed to bring the real thing nearer. Muriel, as Jemima's bridesmaid, was the foreshadowing of Muriel as his own bride; and when he stood by her, as her assigned cavalier, he felt strong to meet the world in arms, gifted as he was with a treasure that money could not buy and that only death would lose—rich where other men were poor, and honoured while honouring;—as is the way with true and wholesome love.

Neither a craven lying at a woman's feet, to be now the despised and now the caressed creature of her caprice; nor yet a master taking by the force of his might that which is valuable only in proportion to the freedom of its gift; but the strong man giving his strength for defence, and his manhood for shelter—the strong man to whom by fitness comes the place of master and the duty of guidance—protecting the weaker from the consequences of her own weakness by governing her life, not by repairing her mistakes;—this was Arthur Machell's idea of a man's right and a woman's duty; and Muriel was so little a daughter of the generation as to agree with him.

To her too this was the rehearsal of that dearer drama of their own which had to come. She had the same happy pride in the present moment and the same glad onlook to the future; and she felt as deeply as he that she was his as much by the right of nature as by the free gift of love. He was her king to whom she was consort not serf; but, if consort and royal in her own degree, yet was he always her king and the supreme. Hers was the love of which the ritual is reverence; and so far she had found it both blessed and blessing. But with all this happiness there came ever and again sudden sad remembrances of her mother's strong but unexplained opposition—of the weary, haunted look in her eyes to-day when she kissed her and bade her good-bye—and a kind of prophetic self-reproach that she had not been strong and self-denying and ranged herself on her mother's side from the first. It was too late now. When she looked up into Arthur's face she knew that!—and when she looked up into his face she forgot all else but what she saw.

All the people said what a fine couple they made as they stood near together behind the bride and her groom; and not a few lamented that it had not been a double event—Miss Aurora sug-

gested 'triple'—both the brothers married on the same day; when they winked and laughed, and said they knew who would have made the best show, and it would not have been the Captain and his poor little pin's head, although he was a fine-looking man for his own part and she was made of gold like Miss Kilmansegg's leg.

How should these last two make a good thing of it, seeing what had brought them there? Of love, not a pretence on his side—barely toleration; and that only by a strong effort of will and a man's natural sense of justice. On hers, obedience to the desires of those who were stronger than herself, and a false fancy that she has been chosen, not bought. There was nothing between them but ambition and need—a wealthy father wanting a social position, and a ruined family wanting money. The only real thing, outside this, was poor Jemima's belief that her Captain loved her—and that was false. It was a marriage founded on shams throughout, so far as feeling went, if the material basis was solid enough; and the world felt what no man knew. Not all the lace and pearls and bridal finery with which she was bedecked could bring Jemima Brown of Clapton up to the Machell mark, nor make those things fit which Nature herself, as well as education, had mismatched. They were married, not mated; and it was impossible for the dullest not to see the truth of things.

But Muriel was Arthur's natural equal; the woman to his man; and between them they possessed all that Wilfrid and Jemima lacked.

As for Derwent, steeped as he was in the witchery of false seeming, life was purely golden all throughout for him to-day, and nothing that earth or man could give was wanting to the present hour. In his own estimation he was the principal person, after Wilfrid, at the marriage of Hilda's brother; himself as good as formally engaged to Hilda, and as certain to succeed in his future career as that to-morrow's sun should rise. He was in the dawn of the brightest day that ever shone on man, and he believed in himself and Hilda, in the beneficence of fate and the generosity of fortune, as much as if a God had sworn by the sacred Styx that he should be the favourite of heaven and supreme among men. It was almost divine to the young, if to the older and more experienced, pathetic and fearful, to see the handsome lad's intense, undoubting confidence in himself and the good offices of the future. Disgrace, sorrow, failure, to come near him? Impossible! The peacocks which draw the car of peace are not herded on the common like mean and cackling geese; and youths like Derwent Smith anticipate the low-lying snares of ill-fortune as little as

the sons of kings anticipate the beggar's dole or the headman's axe.

For the rest old Brown was radiant. His prologue had been the ball, this was the real thing; and he experienced to the full the pleasure of the man who to-day has at last gained the pinnacle of his long cherished desires. To-morrow might reveal a further peak; but for the present he knew no beyond, and was at rest on the summit of his hopes. His very contentment sobered him, at least in manner; and for a marvel he was quiet and for the moment inoffensive.

So far he earned the gratitude of my lady, herself proudly and regally content inasmuch as now all that she had toiled for was secure. The poor little girl might die to-morrow, but Machells was saved. The door was locked once and for ever on those hideous skeletons of unpaid bills and worthless shares which had troubled her peace for so long, and had plucked at her skirts like ghosts at the banquet. Henceforth she might live without fear, and in the pride of her name and state, as belonged to her. But she would be very good to that poor little money-spider who had woven this dazzling net over the frays and fractures of the old ruined home, and shored up its tottering walls with golden beams. She should never regret her marriage, she said to herself, as she stood like a goddess, and looked compassionately at the clod which she had taken up into the empyrean. She would be her protectress and her guide in the strange high world where she was entering by the passport of adoption not inheritance. No, she should never regret her marriage, but, on the contrary, be thankful to fate which had so far befriended her beyond her natural deserts;—for as woman to man, Jemima Brown de Paumelle was no fit match for Wilfrid Machell, thought my lady, lifting her proud head haughtily as she looked from one to the other, and gave its full value to gold and its due worth to nature.

Sir Gilbert, who had taken his salvation as quietly as he had taken his ruin, was glad that Machells was safe, but he would be still more glad when all the fuss of the rescue should be over. His mind was full of things that he wanted done to the estate, and which he must get Wilfrid to see to as soon as he came home. And if he had an active regret, it was that they could not have had the de Paumelle millions without the de Paumelle personalities. As that could not be, they would have to put up with it; but—if the ointment was fragrant, the Brown fly buzzed and was big.

Those who really suffered were the bride and her groom, and the bride's mother. To the two women it was like some sad dream where they were compelled to submit to sorrow, unable to

throw off the hands that clutched their throats and pressed on their hearts, till they thought that they should have died—till they wished that they could have died! But they were helpless. The hour had come, and God works no miracles to lift men out of the pits which they have seen dug before them, and into which they have walked with their eyes open. They had been weak and nerveless, and bared their own throats to the knife; and heaven helps only those who help themselves and know how to resist.

To cling to her pitifully up to the last moment; to look at her with those poor weak loving eyes, wherein by love she was transformed to all imaginable beauty and desirableness of feminine grace; to pity her as the victim of a father's ambition on the one hand, and of a man's unconquerable passion on the other; to bend lower and lower still under the load of her wealth and the uncongenial burden of her dignity, while only wishing that she and her darling might have been let to live their tranquil lives in humble peace and pleasant mediocrity together—this was Mrs. Brown de Pau-melle's state of mind on her daughter's wedding morning; and this would have been Jemima's, had her bewildered senses been left sufficiently free to think clearly or feel distinctly. As it was, she was utterly lost and befogged, knowing nothing but the fact of pain and the sense of terror; while Wilfrid felt his strength in the bitter anguish which he conquered so far as to conceal.

The two stood before the altar where they were bound in the closest ties of man—ties well-nigh indissoluble—like two creatures met in the dark and not recognising each other's name or nature. And they never would recognise each other, neither now nor in the future. They had no common language between them, and no love to frame one of its own.

When the clergyman joined their hands and gave out the formula which they were to repeat after him, Wilfrid felt like a brave man marching up to the scaffold. His mind was made up to endure courageously to the end—no wincing, no halting; but it was endurance, and it was the scaffold; while Jemima, scarcely audible, and stumbling over the words so that they were the symbols of words rather than the things themselves, knew that she was passing from peace into slavery, from a mother's love into a master's possession.

Pale and downcast, her eyelids red with weeping, her meagre figure crushed under her 'bravery,' she was all but effaced into a mere animated clothes-horse; and never did Wilfrid's breadth and strength and solid massiveness of form take such large proportions as now by the very force of contrast. It was the lion and the

mouse, a titan and a pigmy—anything you like of oppressive unfitness; and no one felt this unfitness more than Wilfrid himself. He glanced once and once only to where Muriel stood, tall and graceful, girlishly supple, girlishly simple too, but with the potentiality in her of a so noble if always sweet and tender womanhood; and his heavy mouth grew pinched, his white face whiter than before, as he braced his chest and set his shoulders square and looked resolutely first at the priest and then at his bride—his; and Muriel was to be Arthur's.

At last the irrevocable words were duly spoken and the ceremony came to an end. The names were signed, the fraternal caresses given, and Jemima, with her millions, passed into the irresponsible keeping of a husband who did not love her, and who would be absolute master over every square inch of her being; and then the party left the church and the social part of the day's doings began.

Lady Machell had one good intellectual quality;—when she was beaten she yielded loyally, and neither took snap shots retreating, nor broke out into weak and futile ambush to harass what she could not overcome. In this she was delightfully just, and—anti-feminine; she fought with vigour while victory was possible, but she gave up her arms sincerely when she was beaten, and kept to the terms of capitulation. As now:—when she had given up her contest with Arthur and Muriel, and had accepted his choice as her future daughter-in-law, she accepted her wholly without further reserve or regret.

It would all come right. Uncle Louis would make sufficient settlements; and by means of Wilfrid's county influence—so sure to follow on his de Paumelle millions—Arthur would be put into one of those mysterious places expressly arranged for young sons by Providence working through the British constitution—those mysterious places where, without previous training or the need of climbing ladders by their steps, he would have nominal work and substantial pay—family and wealth doing all that other folks have to do by hard work, close apprenticeship, and stiff examination papers.

Things had been too strong in one way for my lady, and had gone too far to stem now. All that was left to her then was graceful acquiescence, which the strength of will that was part of her very being made her able to give without faltering.

This complete acquiescence was noticeable to everyone in her manner to Muriel, whom she pointedly and publicly adopted. Never in the kindest of her days of darkness, when the girl was only 'pretty Muriel Smith,' and the house favourite of Machells, when Arthur's love was as little suspected as—Wilfrid's—never



'AND THEN THE PARTY LEFT THE CHURCH:

even then had she been so sweet and amiable, so maternal and delightful, as she was now. The world of Grantley Bourne looked and gaped and was fed with rich surmises. They knew when and where and all about the marriage of the handsome younger son before that of the elder was an hour old; and speculations were as rife for this as comments had been for that.

For a very little more Hilda and Derwent would have been given to each other; but there are limits even to the gossip of a small country society, and these limits were set by Hilda's age and apparent childishness of nature. It was sacrilege to think of a little creature, wearing her first long dress only three months ago, as any man's prospective portion; and as for young Derwent, himself a mere lad—this shadowy something that was between them was nothing but a child's affection, of no more consequence than if they had been two children playing at 'castles' by the sea-shore. So the girl's name escaped; which was just as well, judging of things by the light of truth and the spinning of the thread by the hand of the future. Only that breezy old Miss Aurora, true to her colours, wished that the dear little things might be married some of these days when they were old enough; they would make such a lovely little couple!—just like two sweet little love birds on a perch eating sugar and kissing each other all day long!

At breakfast everything to the company went smoothly and without a hitch; though those who suffered before suffered still, as before. The bride pale, bewildered, out of her depth every way, looked only at her mother and drank her tea with difficulty, her tears falling fast into her cup; her mother looked only at her, and let fall drop for drop for sympathy. Old Brown and Wilfrid, as the respective proprietors of these weaker vessels, took each a tone of patronage and support which, different in the outside manner taught by breeding, was substantially the same in spirit—the assertion of superiority over the foolish creatures given to them as wives. Where old Brown joked noisily and ministered fussily—telling his good lady not to damp the bride-cake, and to make it up with her breakfast, at which she had taken pet long enough—not to give way like that, for why, bless his soul and body, it was only natural, as one may say, and young people will fly when they are feathered—Wilfrid spoke in a lowered voice gravely, prescribed champagne, and called the servant to fill Mrs. Machell's glass with a certain kindly condescension to imbecility which would have fired any girl 'with a spirit' more than an open affront. But it gave Jemima all the comfort intended, and indeed all that she could receive under present conditions. If only her Captain would be always thus gentle with and careful of her, he might

dominate her as much as he liked! She did not object to the fact of being driven. She had been used, like her mother—and in that mother's vernacular—to run between the shafts; and she liked it better than freedom, which included, to her mind, desolation and the overpowering burden of responsibility. She was only afraid of whips and goads and starts and sudden checks, not being of the nature that bears well with shocks. So that when her newly-made husband ordered her to drink a glass of champagne, she obeyed automatically; and became the more confused and lachrymose in consequence.

But the breakfast came to an end at last, as the ceremony had done before it. The toasts were drunk; the speeches made; the crackers pulled with a running accompaniment of little screams; the bride-cake was cut in the orthodox way; the programme, sacred to such occasions, was carried out to the last particular; and then the bride went upstairs to change her dress, and to shed with her bridal robes the last remnant of her former self.

While she was absent, Muriel chanced to be standing a little apart in the drawing-room. Arthur had left her to look after some of the arrangements which fell to his share as best man, and Derwent was occupied with Hilda. For the instant no one was speaking to her, popular as she was and generally surrounded by admirers of a kind, when Wilfrid went up, and, bending his head over the book of photographs in her hand, said in a low voice:

‘Do not think worse of me, Muriel, than you can help.’

This was the first time since she had grown from childhood to womanhood that he had called her by her name without prefix.

She looked up startled, surprised.

‘I do not think ill of you at all,’ she said earnestly. ‘I think ill of you? no! Surely it is you who think ill of me!’

‘I have thought so,’ he said, not noticing her last words. ‘You have shown as much blame as dislike for me of late.’

‘Indeed, indeed, no, Captain Machell!’ was her answer, her own transparent simplicity blinding her to the possibility of subterfuge in others. ‘Why should I blame you? and I am sure I do not dislike you!’

He looked into her face when she said this—one of those long searching looks of a man seeking to be convinced and afraid to trust his own impressions.

‘I was never a favourite with you,’ he said. ‘Don’t you remember that in the old days?’

‘I remember your saying so one day when you called at Owlett, not so very long ago,’ she answered, trying to smile; ‘but I do not think that is quite the right way to put it.’

'No? Then I was?'

She laughed and blushed.

'You were so much older,' she said shyly.

'Which comes to the same thing,' was his half-impatient, half-cynical rejoinder. 'We mean the same thing really, but we put it in different ways—I bluntly and disagreeably like the bear I am, but you prettily; wrapping it up in a nice little bit of coloured gelatine—like those crackers downstairs.'

'Which means that I am a humbug!' she said playfully.

'Which means that you are a woman,' he replied.

'What a dreadful cynic you are, Captain Machell!' she said, still good humouredly. 'Poor humanity fares badly enough at your hands!'

'Yes, it always does when men speak the truth,' he answered. 'But let me say however, that I do not think you a humbug, —Muriel—and that I respect no one in the world more than I respect you.'

He spoke with surface calmness but a strong undercurrent of emotion—emotion that made his eyes glisten and his voice husky. It was foolish to tempt himself as he was doing; but he was strong—and it was for the last time.

'Thank you,' said Muriel gratefully.

It was her sign of adoption by the last who had held out against her, and she was naturally pleased—for Arthur's sake.

'If you marry Arthur' he continued—['if!' she thought—'if! when it is sure!']—'you will be happy; happier than—'

He checked himself. What he was on the point of saying was too terrible a confession for a man to make on his wedding day.

'Yes, I shall be happy, very, very happy,' she said; 'and so,' shyly, tenderly, but frankly, 'I hope you will be!'

'God bless you!' he said warmly; 'you deserve to be happy.'

'You have always been kind to me,' said Muriel, smiling; 'I am so glad that you have adopted me as one of you. That was all I wanted to make me perfectly content, and now it has come!'

'Child!' he said, with so much yearning, so much pathos and tenderness in his voice, that Muriel looked up at him startled and distressed.

She met his eyes, as he bent his face to look the better into hers; and saw again the look which she had seen before on the lawn at Machells—a look wholly inexplicable to her, yet full of hidden meaning, sorrowful, reproachful, loving, questioning—a whole world of passionate feeling concentrated in that one glance,

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ARRAIGNED.

FROM an absolutely clear sky the thunderbolt had fallen with terrible precision and deadly effect. The instant that he had launched it, Guy Perceval repented. He had come prepared to confide to Lady Machell in secret solemnity the terrible news which his coachman had just told him during his drive from the station; and it was only when he saw the apparent familiarity between Derwent and Hilda that the impulsive spitefulness which belonged to him, for all his good heart at bottom, broke out, and he flung his cruel words into the midst of the crowd, so that henceforth there should be no mistake as to the true moral standing of the Smiths of Owlett.

For the first moment no one spoke; only a shuddering kind of gasp went through them all, as each person drew his breath hard, and looked to his neighbour to see how he took it. Then Derwent strode forward.

‘It is a lie!’ he said in a clear unfaltering voice, speaking as he believed; had not his father sworn to him?

‘Yes, a lie,’ echoed Arthur taking Muriel’s hand which Lady Machell instinctively let drop.

As instinctively Wilfrid ranged himself on her other side, so that she stood between the brothers like a treasure guarded by each alike. But he did not speak. The action of protection to the girl was the man’s natural impulse, but his silence was the expression of his belief in the possibility of the accusation. It tallied too closely with what he himself had already suspected, making only too clear all that had hitherto been mysterious and unexplained, for him to be able to doubt. A disgraceful secret to keep close as death; and Bob Rushton the joint gaoler and participant. Yes, it was evident enough; if not absolutely certain because not judicially proved, still it was perilously probable; and to a man of the world the majority of chances are conclusive.

Jemima ceased crying and crept to her mother. Both had a faint superstitious feeling that perhaps a case for swift divorce might somehow lie in this revelation, and that they might be suffered to come together again—that big obtrusive Captain expelled—because Mr. Smith, the father of Muriel, Arthur’s affianced wife, was a returned convict who had been fifteen years in prison for felony. Old Brown turned pale and red by turns, and paced the room noisily.

‘God bless my soul and body!’ he said crossly; ‘who in their

five senses, Mr. Perceval, would have come with such a death's head croak as this at a wedding party, and the young people just a-setting off on their tower? If this is what your fine manners comes to, I thank my stars I have only plain ones!

Lady Machell said nothing. As instinctively as she had dropped Muriel's hand she had drawn a little closer to her husband; one of the few times in her life when she had not been equal to the occasion, and felt the need of marital support.

Sir Gilbert, on the contrary, rose to the height of the moment, neither rash to judge unheard nor scared at the possibility of the truth. For all his quiet country life he understood the world well enough to know that the undercurrent, of which a few experts whisper, and which those who see only the surface of things indignantly deny as a libel on English human nature, is a fact; and that society looks one thing while the hidden lives of men are another. He turned to Guy in his mild straightforward way.

'This is as little the time to discuss this matter, Perceval,' he said, 'as it was for your relating it. We know nothing one way or the other, and it is impossible to judge by hearsay. Such a charge as this demands the fullest investigation.'

Then Lady Machell found her voice.

'And shall have it,' she said severely.

'And shall have it—freely—to the end,' was Derwent's proud rejoinder; while Muriel, to whom the whole thing was suddenly clear, turned to her brother with passionate entreaty.

'Derwent! let us go home to papa at once!' she said in a voice that neither broke nor trembled. 'Do not let us leave him a moment longer.'

But she did not look at Arthur. The part of Iphigenia was marked out for her, and she must not weaken herself by looking at the happiness which she had lost.

'That is right, Dimples!' cried Miss Forbes, the powerful bass of her deep-bayed voice coming in among the lighter notes with singular effect, but with a comforting sound to Muriel; she scarcely realised how comforting, how strengthening and supporting; 'and I will take you home,' she continued. 'Oh, yes! don't shake that pretty head of yours—I mean to. This is the time for your friends to show their metal, and how much their deeds back up their words; and I am a friend. Mr. Arthur—elect—with us to Owlett or with your own people to Machells?'

'With you,' said Arthur steadily; and then Muriel turned her face full upon him with a sudden but sad smile, as expressive as a caress.

'Gallantly said!' shouted Miss Forbes, slapping his back with an air. 'I expected no less!'

'And I will come too, Miss Forbes,' said Lady Machell armed with all her dignity; 'Sir Gilbert and I. We will finish with this suspense at once.'

'Yes,' said Derwent, 'we will finish with it at once. And you, Mr. Perceval, shall confront my father, and be forced to eat your own shameful words and confess yourself a liar and a slanderer.'

'If I were you, Smith, I would not take quite so high a tone,' said Wilfrid in a low voice, as he turned away from the little group to take back his forgotten bride—cutting short the interrupting interlude that he might finish the drama in which he himself was chief actor. He was of no good in this matter of Mr. Smith's past history and disgrace discovered, and time was becoming precious. 'Come,' he then said to Jemima, 'we must be going. The train will be late, and we shall only just catch it as it is. Wish your mother good-bye, and come.'

So the last adieus were said; the last kisses given in a turmoil of extraneous excitement which took off some of the sharpness of sorrow from both mother and daughter; and after a few more tears and caresses the poor, pale, limp little soul was ready to depart. As she shook hands with Arthur, she whispered tremulously: 'There's that ten thousand, Mr. Arthur, still;' while in his turn Wilfrid, shaking hands for the second time with Muriel, and with her the last of all, said in a low voice, but not tremulously:

'Poor child! poor child! Remember, I am your friend through it all!'

Then the last rites of the ceremonial were gone through in a dislocated, half-hearted way; the slippers were thrown, the rice was scattered, the people below got up a hearty cheer, the people above waved hands and handkerchiefs, and the bridal pair drove off in silence, broken only by Jemima's sobs in the corner until Wilfrid, looking at his watch, said in the most matter-of-fact voice in which man ever spoke to his two-hour-old bride:

'I think we shall catch it; and have ten minutes in hand.'

It was a sad and silent party that drove up to pretty, quiet, leafy Owlett. Miss Forbes and Arthur were in the carriage with Derwent and Muriel; Lady Machell and Sir Gilbert were together—Hilda being left to the doubtful care of Miss Aurora to take safely home; and Guy Perceval, very much discomposed at the consequences of his untimely rashness, and feeling as if he would have given half-a-year's income to be well clear of the difficulties in which he had so suddenly entangled himself, was examining and cross-examining his coachman as if he had been

either as much of a miscreant as Bob Rushton himself, or the fertile weaver of romances not an echo of which the King's Head had ever heard.

The rest of the company had all dispersed, some wondering what had happened; for it was plain to the dullest that something was amiss; others having heard distorted rumours, making them still more out of shape and line; while those who had been chosen to spend the day at Paumelle House, to break the tedium of the time for the father and check the tears of the bereaved mother, found ample employment in arguing and conjecturing from the facts as really known—judging before proofs brought or evidence given, according to the way of rash minds certain of their lights.

At last the little party of accusers and defenders drew up at the door, and one by one alighted. Then Derwent took Guy Perceval as it were into custody, and, with his hand firmly grasping the other's arm, went into the house to fling the stone which was to prove if the fair seeming surface of the still waters was the true expression of the pure and hidden depths; or if, when disturbed, would be revealed a mass of muddy foulness hitherto undreamt of by the world about the banks.

They found Mr. and Mrs. Smith, strangely enough, in the drawing-room; and the children at least felt how opportune the chance was. It took off what else would have been the appearance of taking these beloved parents before the judgment seat; an informal judgment seat it is true, but none the less potent.

When they entered, Muriel, breaking away from Arthur, threw herself into her father's arms.

'Dear, dear papa!' she said, kissing him passionately in between her sudden sobs and tears; 'dear, best-beloved papa!'

She knew all in her heart, but her election was made. Though the whole world should forsake him, she would remain faithful; she and her mother would love and reverence him to the end; sacrificing their own happiness that he might forget his sorrow, sharing his humiliation that he might believe himself replaced in honour.

'Father!' said Derwent, in his clear voice, standing straight and proud, while Edmund smoothed Muriel's hair, and kissed her forehead, and forgot the graver bearing of the moment in his grief at her distress. 'Father! here is a man who says that you have been—I scarcely like to insult your ears by using such words—but he says that you have been a forger, and are a returned convict. Will you tell me how I can best punish him?'

'I will tell you instead how I got my information, Mr. Smith;

said Guy, speaking with an agitation that sharpened his tones into bell-wires. 'My coachman heard it yesterday evening from that man Rushton whom you have taken into your service. The two were drinking together at the King's Head—for which Romer will have to go—and Rushton, not quite sober, but not so drunk as not to know what he was about, told him that you had been prison companions at Bindwood, and that your offence had been forgery, as his had been theft. This is all that I know; but knowing it, I told Lady Machell as my duty to an old friend. If false, your innocence can be easily proved; if true, it is only right that your neighbours should know the truth; and more especially—all things considered—the Machell family.'

There was a dead silence. Mrs. Smith kept her eyes fixed on her husband; his were still on Muriel, always clinging to him, always holding him like a treasure to her heart—her dear papa, her poor papa; whatever else might be, always her own, her beloved, her father.

'Yes, it is easily disposed of if false,' said Sir Gilbert cheerfully; while Lady Machell, looking now at Edmund Smith and now at Arthur, and from this last to Muriel, drawing up her figure and tightening her lips, put in as a rider:

'But it must be investigated, Mr. Smith—strictly.'

Still Edmund did not speak. He flushed and turned pale; looked round as if to find some place of retreat—some hole where he might hide; and then turned his haggard eyes with pathetic appeal to his wife ever watching him, ever marking his mood and following on his will. He flung up his hand as if in despair. He had been tracked and hunted down, and escape was impossible. It was useless to fence or to deny. The truth had caught him, and he was the captive of her as well as of his past.

His wife read it all. She made a few steps towards him with the grace of a queen, the dignity of a goddess. Never had she looked so grand, so beautiful, so noble, so superior to man and to sin! She stood by his side and took his hand in hers, carrying it reverently to her lips.

'Yes,' she said in a voice as clear as Derwent's had been, lifting her head and meeting Lady Machell's steady, scornful gaze as steadily if not so scornfully; 'what you have heard is true. He is a returned convict; and my loved and honoured husband through it all!'

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

DECEMBER 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN ARMS.

IN the eyes of the world, excess in virtue is an unpardonable offence. Be truthful, loyal, honest, chivalrous, up to the rational standard of the majority, and when you fall short, conceal; but to go beyond that standard is to bring on yourself as much condemnation as if you had fallen short—and perhaps a little more.

Thus, wifely devotion is a very good thing in its way, and women are required to be faithful to their husbands and mindful of their vows; but there are limits: and when society is incensed against a man, it would that his wife, sticking close to him on principle, was incensed against him too, rather than that her devotion should be by the free choice of love. It does not like its sinners to be consented with, nor the dishonour which it has branded to be condoned; it forbids that its excommunicated should be succoured, and would, if it could, banish its moral lepers to a place apart where the clean should not be offended by their presence; and when even their own stand lovingly by its banished, it holds itself aggrieved by a devotion which defies its decrees and nullifies its punishment.

This was the state of public feeling at Grantley Bourne where Mrs. Smith's fidelity was discussed as warmly as Mr. Smith's crime; and the one found to be very nearly as blameworthy as the other. She was condemned on all sides and for every kind of reason:—some saying that she ought to have thought more of her children than of her husband; others, that she had insulted society by living with him at all; others again, that she outraged morality by professing to still love a convicted felon: but some stood sternly on the strict text, 'for better, for worse,' and while suffering no paltering with the strict application of the words, maintained that she should

have gone into exile from the first, and have separated her children from the children of the unconvicted, as the goats, poor things, should be separated from the sheep. They could not get over it. Conjugal fidelity and felony—felony which should, if it does not, break up a marriage as poison used to shatter fine Venetian glass—a returned convict for the husband of one's neighbour and the father of one's hypothetical daughter-in-law? It was not a pleasant position for anyone; though perhaps the family of the unfortunate convict himself was the most to be pitied:—to hear Grantley Bourne, it would seem society—society which had rubbed its virtuous shoulders with a convict, and given its own clean hands in fellowship to a forger.

Indignation meetings were held from house to house, where Miss Forbes and Mr. Oliphant were the only speakers who said a good word for Mrs. Smith or a charitable one for her husband.

Mrs. Constantine maintained that Mrs. Smith ought to have told them from the first, and thus have saved them from the humiliation of such a dreadful association—or at least have left them free to choose their own line of action. But even Lady Machell confessed that this was an act of heroism hardly to be expected; and when the other shifted her ground and said it was an infamous thing to come to the place at all, Sir Gilbert mildly remarked that she must live somewhere, and it would have been the same thing to any neighbourhood wherever she had gone.

'Then she should have kept herself in rigorous seclusion,' said Mrs. Constantine sharply.

On which Miss Forbes turned round on her without mercy, and in that sledge-hammer manner so well known to all, reminded Mrs. Constantine and Grantley Bourne in general that the poor dear soul had never sought any among them, but had been from the first noticeably reticent and restricted. So the rest were forced to confess; but they did it with a sniff, understanding the cause of it now, and no better pleased than they had been when they did not understand it, and had resented her refusal of the intimacy which they offered as an affront that deserved rebuke.

Mrs. Lucraft's opinion was that she ought to have made her husband dead, and not have let him come home at all; but Mrs. Constantine, whose ideas on the marriage vow were strict, professed herself shocked, and said that she was bound to keep with him under any change of circumstance, only she ought not to say that she loved and respected him. This was her offence—a padding of her cross highly reprehensible, and indeed an offence against morality in the abstract. Then there were the children, continued Mrs. Constantine sternly; a felon's children; and Muriel engaged

to that poor dear Arthur Machell! What a dreadful state of things!—and suppose that young Derwent had followed up matters at Sharpeley, and become attached to Mina—Mina was twenty-eight, if a day—as it seemed likely at one time, what a fearful catastrophe! How thankful she was to an over-ruling Providence who had taken such gracious care of her and her dear girls!

It all came round to the same thing—Guelfs and Ghibellines, white and black, each party stood on the one central position:—It was a dreadful state of things, and Mrs. Smith was very much to blame. But the odd part of it was, that everyone found now that he or she had suspected something of the kind from the first; and each reminded the other of sundry dark sayings, which, like the Sibyl's oracles, were intelligible only after the event, and served neither for light nor guidance when darkness was about and men were wandering in lost paths.

It was Miss Forbes who mainly provoked these discussions, under the idea that talking clears the air, and that the hearty advocacy which she carried into them would do the poor dears good. And certainly she stood by them gallantly.

She for one would not desert them, she said again and again, with the style and air of a grenadier protecting a house full of frightened huddled women. They were penitent; that poor dear fellow was broken-hearted; and she was on the side of those who rejoice over sinners saved. She had just sent them over a basket of choice pears such as they had not at Owlett, and yesterday she sent some grapes and the last of her late marrowfats.

Some people laughed at her, and some looked coldly on her for her advocacy; some twitted her with a weakness for criminals—as witness Bob Rushton, the slippery scoundrel!—and some asked her jeeringly:—did she want men to get up a public testimonial to Mr. Smith, as was done for that interesting murderer who not only saved his neck from the halter, but even received a purse of gold in token of a nation's penitent regard?

Miss Forbes was not a woman to be laughed out of her position of antagonism, or jeered into voting with the majority. She generally held her own pretty firmly to the end; and in the present matter, if she could not turn, she at least did something to stem the torrent, and made some among them feel that all against one were odds more unequal than Englishmen in general think just. Even this was a gain which counted for something, and was so far better than no gain at all.

At Machells, things were, as might have been expected, black and stormy enough. My lady assumed Arthur's acquiescence in

her repudiation of the Smiths, root and branch; and Arthur did not acquiesce. He was terribly shocked at the revelation—humiliated for Muriel—revolted to find himself standing so close to the dark shores of dishonour; but Muriel was always Muriel, and the sins of her father, if they overshadowed, did not stain her. Besides, the lustre of his own name would conceal the tarnish on her own; and fortunately Smith was too common to carry its history with it.

‘You would bring a felon’s blood into the family?—make your father—make me—the grand-parents of a convict’s children?’ cried Lady Machell proudly, passionately. ‘You will give this man’s daughter as a sister to Hilda?—you, Arthur, so proud as you have always been of your name?—so chivalrous as you have always been to your mother and sister?’

‘And loving and honouring them now as I have always done, dear mother,’ said Arthur gently. ‘But I owe something also to Muriel, and the same constancy that her mother has shown her husband who has done wrong, I owe to my affianced wife who has done none.’

‘An engagement is not a marriage,’ said Lady Machell scornfully. ‘There is no dishonour in breaking off an affair when proved to be disastrous and inconsiderate.’

‘To my mind there is,’ he answered. ‘You know, mother, that I have always looked to things rather than their symbols, and the meaning of an engagement is as sacred to me as a marriage. I should as soon think of being false to the one as to the other.’

‘I trust that my sense of honour is as keen as yours,’ said his mother coldly. ‘This seems to me Quixotism—no! self-indulgence, headstrong passion, masking itself as Quixotism—rather than true honour, which, like every other thing, to be wholesome, should be rational and just.’

‘I am not irrational to be true to the woman I love, in spite of her father’s fault,’ began Arthur.

‘Fault!’ interrupted my lady; ‘had you not better call it a venial mistake at once, Arthur?’

‘No, it is a fault—a crime—a dishonour; I will go all lengths with you in condemning it,’ he answered. ‘But granting all its shame and infamy, Muriel is not touched by it, and I am not to blame for taking her to be my wife.’

‘Your religion is not quite so orthodox as I could wish,’ said Lady Machell with a courtly smile. ‘In my Bible I read that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and that a son should obey his parents. You perhaps have an expurgated edition?’

'I have my own,' said Arthur hardily.

'Which is not God's,' returned my lady.

'Which is the Bible of love and honour, dear mother,' he answered.

'Of disobedience and of dishonour, you mean,' she said. 'You ought to put yourself to school again, Arthur, and learn the true meaning of words from a dictionary.'

He went over to her and tried to take her hands, but she drew them coldly away and busied herself with the frill of her tucker.

'Dear mother,' he said tenderly; 'I am sorry to hurt you; and I am sure you know that, mother—always my mother!—yet I have resolved on this marriage, and nothing but death can turn me from it. I love Muriel if possible more than ever now that I know she has need of me, and I should be dishonoured in my own eyes were I to forsake her. I am so sorry to pain you! but I must be frank; and you know that I am firm.'

'Shall you live here?' asked Lady Machell with dangerous quietness; 'bring your convict wife as a daily companion for your sister, and her father as the bosom friend of your own?'

'No, I shall carry out my original intention,' he replied a quietly. 'I shall go to Australia.'

'Ah! to Australia? I think you have shown great judgment, Arthur,' said my lady with the same strange manner of polite acquiescence. 'Your wife will be among her natural set there, and I should think would feel more at home than among people like ourselves for instance. I daresay you will have to go through some unpleasantness before you get accustomed to your new surroundings. You see you have not been used to forgers and convicts.'

'I shall take what I get cheerfully, I hope,' he answered with a heightened colour but in perfect good humour. 'But I fancy that all Australian society is not made up of felons. I have seen some very decent fellows from there, and have known as decent ones go there.'

'Leaving your family, your country, does not seem to trouble you very much,' said my lady, her under lip slightly quivering.

'My family?—I must leave them wherever I live; I cannot be always at Machells; and you would scarcely wish it if I could. And for my country, I love it dearly enough, but as an Englishman who carries his real country with him. Mother!' he said with some warmth, tossing back his hair; 'I am sick of the shams of English life—of such shifts as we have been put to for the sake of position—of such a marriage as Wilfrid has made for the sake of money. I want to go into a freer and simpler life where a man's

worth is his true value, and where he may dare to live and be himself as no one dares here.'

'So! you have become a communist as well as all the rest!' his mother answered. 'We are fortunate in our younger son.'

'Perhaps not so unfortunate as you think at this moment,' was his answer, as he took her hands by gentle force and this time held and kissed them; while she, feeling that her heart was broken and her life wrecked, conquered her mother's natural instinct to throw her arms round his neck and kiss and bless him, preferring instead to nurse the wound which her ambition had received and to nourish the anger which had taken the place of her former love.

More was said; but to what good? It was all merely a repetition of the battle that had been fought before—but fiercer now than before, because more was at stake, according to Lady Machell. But as it had gone then so it went now, and the lover proved stronger than the son. The interview ended by Lady Machell refusing her consent to the marriage, and prophesying the divine displeasure in consequence; in Arthur's unfeigned expression of sorrow but of quite as unmoved resolve; and in his declaration that he intended to marry and go out so soon as he had finished his preparations in London, where he was going to-morrow.

That a word should be said on the other side did not enter into the calculation of a Machell. It was only whether or no he would fulfil his bond—the chances of Muriel having her own views on that fulfilment not counting.

If however Lady Machell was impenetrable, Sir Gilbert was not; and Arthur soon broke through the crust and touched the soft part of him. True, he made pretence to frown and to speak with forced severity; but it was all a mask: and Sir Gilbert was one of those men whose masks fall off at a touch like the husk from a ripe nut or the last petal of a shaken flower. He kept up the pretence for a certain time, just for the sake of decency and parental appearances; but, pushed into a corner, his guard was broken down and his true heart spoke out. Laying his hands on his son's shoulder, he said, a trifle huskily:—

'My boy, at your age I should have done the same; whether wisely or not is another matter. Still—God bless you! You are headstrong and wilful, Arthur, as all the Machells are, and I hope that you will never have cause to repent. The strain is a bad one—there is no getting over that fact; but the girl herself is all right, and—I suppose it must be! I am sorry to lose you—but—God bless you, my boy! You might perhaps have done worse!'

Which, considering all the circumstances, was as much as Arthur could expect and more than he had dared to hope.

Some little comfort came to my lady through Hilda. Arthur was wilful and disobedient, as his father said—the one great disappointment of the family ; but the child was a miracle of obedience and reasonableness. She recognized the futility of everything, and threw up her cards with the prettiest air of never having held them in serious play that could be imagined. It was not for nothing that she had been taught self-mastery for the sake of the world and expediency, and Lady Machell had reason to rejoice in the success of her training.

When she was questioned, she denied with the most candid air, the most unflinching eyes, that any tender passages had ever been between her and Derwent Smith—certainly not ! She had never had such an idea !—excepting when he had saved her life—at the risk of his own. She put this in with a quiet manner of unconsciousness that took from it the air of reminder—and with reminder, reproach—which else it might have had. And then she added with a smile :—

‘ And that was only a silly burst of half fright, half gratitude.’

They had been boy and girl together, she continued, threading her beads and speaking carelessly, but not so carelessly as to excite suspicion because of exaggeration ; and she had always been fond of Muriel. Of course she liked poor Mr. Derwent too ; but really she felt just a little girl yet, and the idea of anyone in the world making a goose of himself with her never entered her head. ‘ No ! ’ she said smiling, mother need not be afraid of her. She was not in love with him or with anyone else—she said this a little earnestly—and did not want to have to think of such things for years and years to come ! She was quite of mother’s opinion that they could not go on knowing the Smiths after what had come out about them ; and if Arthur would marry Muriel—here she began to cry bitterly—he had better go to Australia, or anywhere he liked, so that he did not bring her to Machells.

‘ That child has a wonderful amount of sense as well as good feeling,’ said Lady Machell to her husband that night. ‘ She is so docile—so easily managed. Only take her the right way, and she is like wax in the hands of authority.’

‘ Bless her, yes ! ’ said her father with his sweet contented smile, without thinking that at this moment Hilda was reading a letter received surreptitiously that very day from Derwent, in which he told her that his heart was broken, but that he renounced her for her own honour’s sake, as he would never ask her to degrade her family by mingling with his own. For himself, she would always be to him his one sole beloved, his star, his queen, his goddess ; but he would not hold her by even the slightest thread ;

and all that he craved was sometimes a faint and tender remembrance of him as one who would have given his life for her, but who would not ask her to share in his dishonour. It was a letter characteristic of Derwent throughout—a little high-flown, very honourable, egotistical even while unselfish; but pure and fresh and young, and if somewhat narrow in its highmindedness yet true to his best impulses, and faithful to virtue as he knew and understood it.

Hilda cried gently when she received the letter; and kissed it often. Then she dried her eyes, and put it carefully away among her treasures—where she had already put the orange-blossom and the ‘consolation prize’ with which Derwent Smith was associated: that is, in a large envelope, on the outside of which was written: ‘Hair: Father, Mother, Wilfrid, Arthur.’ This envelope was tied about with ribbon and apparently firmly sealed—in case that mother should take it into her head to look through her girl’s desk in her absence, according to the privileges, not to say duties, of mothers as interpreted by Lady Machell. In reality it was only slightly gummed, so that the child, who knew the trick of it, could open it when she pleased and solace herself with the contents. It was an ingenious little bit of deception; but Lady Machell’s reins were tight, her curb sharp, and her hand heavy; and human nature has an ugly trick of shooting out its roots under-ground, like couch-grass or creeping silver-weed, when not allowed to flourish fairly in the light of the sun and before the face of men.

Long years afterwards those childish treasures were taken out and looked at by a certain matron who had married money, but in all whose splendour was not to be found a corner two feet square where Love could live, and whose happiness had no more substance than that of a pale ghost flitting sadly from room to room and finding rest in none. And the occasion on which she took out these childish treasures was when a man of wealth and eminence, who had done the state a brilliant diplomatic service, was raised from the ranks of the commonalty and made a peer—the lustre of whose new name eclipsed the splendour of many of the old-established glories. The matron then looked at the crumbling dust which represented the once fresh symbols of her own past girlhood, and sighed a little more regretfully than she would have cared should have been noted by the father of her children. If she had been brave and faithful?—strong to wait and firm to hope? Well! she would have been disobedient to her mother and false to her own promise; but her social glory would have been greater and her personal happiness truer than now.

But this was many years hence—a vision shown only as a shadow on the prophet's glass; and meanwhile the things of to-day pressed, and the skein, at this moment entangled, had first of all to be put straight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CHOICE.

BUT what was the social storm which raged without, when the secret history of Mr. Edmund Smith was made known, compared to that stiller but more deadly destruction—that annihilation of all happiness, that sweeping away of all honour, within the four walls of Owlett? When the fatal truth manifested itself at last, and the father's oath was shown to have been a coward's effort at concealment, not the honest man's indignant denial at an imputed crime and passionate assertion of his innocence, Derwent passed through the fire of a torture which was worse to his proud heart than death itself. It was death indeed in one form; and that the most terrible!

If Edmund Smith had been brave in time and met his fate fairly face to face, it would have been less hard to bear; as it was, delay and falsehood had added their force to the original sin; and in proportion to the sincerity of his false trust was poor Derwent's reaction of revulsion and despair.

It was all over. Home, father, his family honour, his early love of whose ultimate attainment he had had such boyishly certain hopes of late, his pride in the untarnished purity of his race, in the faultless honour of his name—all had left him; and he was standing like a second Adam expelled from Paradise for no fault of his own, and with no Eve to follow him into banishment and soothe his grief by sharing it. For it came now to the choice for Muriel, between home and him. What would she do? Go with him and make a new life with their uncle Louis for their friend and guardian, or remain here in this dishonoured home, to share in the sorrow of the mother and the shame of the father? She, like himself, was ruined; would she accept with him the only means of salvation possible, or stay by the wreck and go down with it to destruction?

He dared not hope, and he would not renounce. From the first Muriel had adopted her mother's tone about this mysteriously unhappy father of theirs—this sweet-mannered, tender, and mournful victim of undeclared injustice and the tyranny of an evil fortune; and she had loved him as much as she had pitied. She had not been watchful and critical like her brother; she had not

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able!—it seems a farce for us to say such a thing!’ he added bitterly; ‘but at least so far as we can ever be honourable again. For do what we will the stain will cling and we can never work it out!’

‘And leave papa and mamma?—abandon them now when all the world is against them? No!’ said Muriel, with her mother’s soul in her unwavering eyes; ‘I cannot leave them!’

‘Then you abandon me instead?’ he returned.

‘No, dearest boy, it is you who will leave us,’ she answered.

‘Would you have me live here, Muriel?—become the boon companion of our father’s pleasant associate Bob Rushton, and degrade myself at last so thoroughly to the level of our circumstances that I shall not be ashamed of them? Is this the path you would think it becoming in me to follow?’

‘I do not say that you are to blame for going,’ she said, not noticing his bitterness, only putting out her sweet womanly power of soothing. ‘You are a man and would have to leave home under any conditions. You have to make your way in the world and are in your right to go; but I am a girl and my place is at home.’

‘Such a home as this?’ he said with a scornful accent.

‘Yes, even here,’ she answered. ‘Whatever papa and mamma may have done I ought not to desert them.’

‘I do not agree with you, Muriel. Though you are a girl you have also your way to make and your own name to respect.’

‘My name is theirs,’ she said.

‘Well! you must decide as you think best,’ he returned. ‘I thought that you would have been sure to stand by me before all the world, and in preference to all the world. The day is dark for me at this moment; but I must live through it even if it becomes still darker—as it will by you deserting me.’

‘Darling boy! but think how dark it would be for them if both of us were to leave them at once!’ she said, looking pitifully towards the house.

‘He has no claim, and my mother made her election long ago,’ Derwent answered proudly.

‘Derwent!’ she remonstrated; ‘he is always our father; and can you speak like this of mamma? poor patient sweet mamma!’

‘He is no father of mine!’ he answered, flinging up his head; ‘he swore falsely to me; he has disgraced us, and covered himself with dishonour twice over. He is not my father—I repudiate him!’

‘Oh this is the worst of all!’ cried Muriel, clasping her hands before her eyes; then, turning to her brother, she said in a tone of mingled grief and horror: ‘Do not say such dreadful things, Derwent! they are worse than wicked!’

noted this lapse and that incongruity; but had accepted all things with the unquestioning faith of a true-hearted woman whose love is the crucible wherein the very faults of the beloved are transmuted into pure gold. And now when the blow had fallen, would she turn from him, to add one other to the griefs already laid on him?—or would she cling to him all the closer because of his very failure, that she might make up by her love for the loss of men's esteem, and supply by her devotion the rent left by his own dishonour?

This was the question now; and one which Derwent was to resolve before another hour had passed.

They were in the garden; in their old happy place beneath the tulip-tree, where nature herself seemed to have changed like the rest on this gusty, grey September day—such a contrast to yesterday, when Wilfrid's ill-assorted marriage, surrounded by such exquisite harmonies of love and hope though itself so pale and discordant, had been ushered in by a sky that seemed to have been borrowed from the sunny south, and accompanied by beauty that compressed into one point all that England had of most lovely and well-ordered.

'Your marriage now, my poor darling, is as impossible as my own,' he said tenderly. 'You can no more take your dishonoured blood into the family than I can offer my disgraced name. We are cut off from everything and everyone but each other.'

Muriel was sitting with her hands crossed on her lap—tearless, motionless, silent. The blow that had fallen on them all had crushed her too much to leave any active sense of personal pain. She was thinking more of papa and mamma, of poor Derwent—and of Arthur—than of herself; half-wondering, as the young do, why such misery should be allowed, and could it not be prevented?

'Yes, I know,' she said very quietly, her eyes looking straight before her. 'I have written to—him—to tell him so.'

'What will you do?' then asked Derwent.

He was not crushed. On the contrary, every nerve was feverishly alive—every fibre quivering with anguish. He was in that mood which makes a man exaggerate the evil of his days, and with that exaggeration increase his pain.

She looked up at him a little dazed.

'What can I do?' she asked. 'There is nothing for any of us to do but to cling together, and suffer.'

'No, by no means cling together—all of us in one group,' said Derwent hastily. 'You and I—yes; and my father and mother—but you must come with me. Muriel! leave this dreadful place, and let us begin a new and honourable life together. Honour—'

able!—it seems a farce for us to say such a thing!’ he added bitterly; ‘but at least so far as we can ever be honourable again. For do what we will the stain will cling and we can never work it out!’

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‘My uncle does not think so,’ said Derwent. ‘In his letter to-day, in answer to my telegram yesterday, he puts the whole thing plainly enough; and he gives us our choice as plainly. Which will we do?—you and I, Muriel—leave home and become his adopted children, take his social position and inherit his fortune, on condition that we renounce our father and change our name to Meredith, or stay here at home in infamy, living on the allowance which he has made all these years to the family of the man who robbed him? My mind is made up: I shall accept his offer. What will you do?’

Muriel raised her head and looked at her brother, her large blue eyes dark with mingled tenderness and reproach, her face instinct with sorrow and surprise. If his was the purity which must abhor evil and shrink from contact with the sinner, hers was that which clings to love and from pity rises to forgiveness.

‘Leave them like that?’ she repeated; ‘renounce them? renounce mamma? change my name and cut myself off from them for ever? And you can do this, Derwent? you? when mamma has been to us what she has, and you have always been her favourite? No! a thousand times over! All that has come out only makes me cling to them closer and closer. Poor papa!’

‘Muriel, don’t!’ he said with a passionate gesture.

‘Yes, poor papa!’ she repeated steadily. ‘Think of his dreadful life!—and then, Derwent boy, we do not know all the story, nor how he was tempted. We ought not to judge him so harshly!’

‘Was he tempted when he called God to witness to that lie?’ cried Derwent, his pale face flaming. ‘Muriel! right and good are eternal; and if our father or anyone else breaks their laws he, as anyone else would be, is shamed and shameful!’

‘But it is not for us to say,’ she said hastily; ‘and at all events mamma has done nothing wrong.’

‘My mother has lived for fifteen years a life of deception towards us,’ he said coldly.

‘No!’ cried Muriel with a warmth rare for her; ‘she only kept papa’s secret, as she had the right to do! And after all this, for us their children to add to their trouble?—no, Derwent, indeed not!’

‘That is your deliberate choice?’ he then said without wincing or wavering. ‘Abide by it, dear, for as long as you can. When you are forced to reconsider your determination, as you will become to me. For me, I shall not sleep another night in my father’s house. I shall leave this evening, and except to you, Muriel, I am dead from to-day to all at Grantley Bourne.’

All this was said with the most extraordinary quietness of manner, a manner that was as new and strange as the rest. Muriel looked up once to see if it were indeed Derwent who was speaking; if he had not changed as much as her father's past and her own future. But the face, the eyes, the hair, the voice, all were the same; only the informing spirit was not the spirit of the brother whom hitherto she had known. That in truth was the soul of another.

'And you can leave us all in this terrible grief?' she said again, wondering at his hardness. 'You can add so much to what we are all suffering? Derwent! I cannot believe it!'

'I add nothing to any but you; and you have free choice of action,' he answered with quiet resolve.

'And mamma?'

'She has preferred her husband, who ruined us, to her children,' was his reply; 'and she too must abide by her choice. Do not let us speak of this,' he added hastily. 'It is only for you, my poor mistaken darling, that I am sorry.'

'And for yourself, Derwent,' she said with loving reproach.

'For myself,' he answered, not accepting her rebuke and putting it by with the lofty air habitual to him, 'I am simply destroyed. Do not let us talk of myself. I am only sorry to leave you, my dearest friend and companion of all my life; but you will it so, and I can do nothing.'

His voice, which had broken a little, steadied itself at the last words. The mother's tenacity and power of resolve which ran through him made itself felt at this his first real contact with the hard things of life; his first struggle with a tangible not a sentimental misfortune. He had leapt at a bound from the dreamy unpracticality in which he had hitherto lived to the sorrowful understanding and power of a man. But the transition was a painful one; and of all who suffered at the present crisis perhaps no one was so much to be pitied as he, he being the only one who had not some form of love to hold by.

'Here are papa and mamma,' said Muriel, as her father and mother passed through the porch and came slowly across the lawn to the seat under the tulip-tree, where their children were; the last family council ever to be held beneath its shade.

Both the young people rose—Muriel with the unconscious reverence of love, Derwent with the conscious courtesy of well-bred enmity; the former went across the lawn to meet her parents, but the latter stood erect and still, waiting. This was the first time they had met since the scene of yesterday, when all had been made known.

The father came with bent shoulders, depressed head—his eyes on the ground, but seeing nothing because of the tears that filled them—walking with the dragging gait of an old man; but the mother lifted her beautiful face to the sky, and through all its sorrow spoke the old heroic resolute spirit which she had cherished for so many years—the heroism of love, the resoluteness of a woman's constancy.

'You have heard from your uncle, Derwent?' she began quite quietly.

'Yes,' he answered.

'I also. He tells me that he has written to you; and he tells me of the offer that he has made to you and Muriel.'

Derwent's voice suddenly ran dry. He bent his head in token of the assent he could not pronounce.

'He gives you little time for your decision,' continued the mother. 'By return of post he says.'

'Yes,' half-whispered Derwent; then with a supreme effort he added: 'Time enough; I have decided.'

The mother's pale face turned paler still, and her dark steady eyes suddenly failed and drooped. She did not speak for a few minutes, but presently she too conquered herself.

'What have you decided on doing?' she asked in a voice made artificially level. 'I feel that you must be left free to form your own judgment and to arrange your own life.'

'I am left no choice,' answered Derwent proudly. 'I accept my uncle's offer.'

The father looked up swiftly, a spasm as if of acute pain passing over his face; the mother caught her breath and mechanically pressed her hand against her heart.

'Yes?' she then said. 'You renounce us altogether?'

'I begin a new life under new conditions,' he answered with unintentional disingenuousness.

'No, my boy,' said his father, suddenly waking as it were into life and self-assertion. 'You leave us because you, my son, have judged me more harshly than anyone else has done; because you have neither mercy nor pity, and less love for us than for yourself.'

'I leave you because I cannot and will not live with dishonour,' flashed out Derwent. 'If my mother had wished me to be able to bear the truth, which she knew must be told some day, she should have brought me up with the indifference to shame and the looseness of principle that alone could reconcile a son to such a family history as mine. It was cruel to teach me to love honour only to give me as my inheritance disgrace and humiliation.'

'Perhaps she trusted to the son's natural piety of love, and to

the man's power of seeing all round a question and understanding how one may fail under a sudden temptation and yet not be bad all through,' Edmund answered, with a certain pride for which his son involuntarily respected him. 'The sorrow and disappointment are not all on your side, Derwent; your mother and I feel both in another direction; and perhaps the son is as unsatisfactory in his own way as the father.'

'I am afraid, sir, that you must be content with me as I am without the hope of change,' the boy returned, holding up his head. 'I confess it—without shame—honour counts for more with me than love; and I prefer to tear my very heartstrings asunder rather than let them cling round a disgraced name and a dishonoured home.'

'You have said enough, Derwent,' said his mother hastily. 'Your decision is of itself sufficiently expressive—you need not dilate on it. And you, my Muriel?' she added, turning to her daughter. 'What is yours to be?'

The girl flung her arms round her brother, but she turned her sweet pale suffering face fondly to her parents.

'I love Derwent,' she said, clinging to him as she used in the old childish days when she had been tired or frightened or rebuked, and he had been her guardian and protector; 'but I cannot leave you and poor dear darling papa! You are always papa and mamma to us, and I cannot leave you.'

Edmund broke into a sudden fit of hysterical weeping, and even Mrs. Smith for all her self-possession sobbed softly to herself. Derwent, holding his sister closely pressed, looked far away into vacancy, his dry eyes full of passionate grief, his lips tightly closed, his nostrils quivering and dilated. He was sore to his very soul, but he was neither shaken nor unmanned. He had to finish his task as he had begun, and to find his strength sufficient for himself all through.

'God bless you, my darling!' said Edmund at last; 'you do not know how happy you have made me by your love in the midst of all my suffering.'

'God bless you, Muriel!' said her mother, looking at her son yearningly. 'You have chosen the better part, my child, and you will have your reward.'

Derwent put his sister gently from him.

'Go, dear,' he said with no petty jealousy, only with the quiet renunciation of heartbreak. 'You are theirs, not mine. I am alone.'

'Never alone while your mother lives to welcome you back to the home you have only to claim to have,' said his mother; while Muriel, clasping her hands round his arm tried to draw him nearer

to them. But he unfastened her hands gently, and again put her away, as if giving her to her parents; then saying, in a constrained voice: 'I shall see you again to wish you good-by,' strode off into the house to prepare for his first and final departure from the old home.

'You are sure of yourself, my darling?' asked Edmund Smith, caressing his daughter. 'You will not repent, and wish that you had gone with your brother?'

'No, papa,' she answered, kissing him in return, but sobbing bitterly as she said, in the manner of a cry: 'My poor Derwent! poor Derwent! Mamma, what can we do for our boy?'

'Nothing,' said Mrs. Smith in a low voice. 'He has chosen, and he must go.'

'Poor wife!' said Edmund tenderly, and with as much humility as tenderness. 'What a curse I have been to you! How far better it would have been if you had made me dead, and so have rid yourself for ever of such an infliction.'

She turned to him with feverish passion.

'Hush! hush!' she cried. 'Leave me my love, Edmund, and my belief that I can make you happy. It is all that I have left to me!'

And Muriel did not resent the implied exclusion. Derwent had been so long the spoilt darling of both mother and sister that it seemed only natural he should be held for all and she counted for nothing in comparison; but the father caught the omission.

'And this dear angel,' he said fondly taking Muriel's hand in both of his and pressing it to his heart.

'Muriel is part of myself,' said the mother, looking towards the house where her eldest, her best beloved, he in whose beauty she had taken such delight and whose stately pride of youth and honourable pride of purity had been her glory, was preparing to repudiate them all—his mother with the rest. 'Muriel and I have always been one; she is my daughter;' she continued vaguely, with a kind of wonder that she did not die of her pain. 'I have counted on her of course—a daughter comes so close to a mother; one does not think of things with her; but——'

She could not finish her sentence; she did not want to break down, and the trial was almost beyond her strength.

'Go to your brother, my dear,' she then said to Muriel after a short pause. 'He will like to have you for the last hour at the old home, and I will stay with your father. You like me to be with you, dear, do you not?' she added in the same passionate manner, as Muriel left them to go to Derwent. 'I do make you happy, Edmund, do I not?'

‘My best happiness,’ he said. ‘With you and our child I can be perfectly happy.’

‘That is well, dear, quite well. If only I can make you happy, darling!’ she said; and then clasping her burning hands before her eyes, she gave one deep bitter cry which she stifled like a thing suddenly killed as she turned to her husband and strained him to her heart.

That last hour of the boy’s old life soon passed, and Derwent came down into the hall dressed for his long journey out into the world. His trunks were already on the carriage; the servants, some in tears, were standing about the passages and hall; Muriel was clinging to him, weeping and trembling; the mother, pale as if death-stricken, stood near him fighting with her impulse to clasp him in her arms and win him to throw over his pride, his future, and make one family to sink or swim together—fighting with the weakness and the strength of her love alike, for what she felt to be his right of election, his sacredness of repudiation; while the father in the drawing-room, his face hidden on his crossed arms which rested on the table, thought back on his prison life with regret—wishing that he had had the courage never to return home at all but to have made himself dead as he once intended, rather than to have brought them misery and disgrace that he might be soothed by their presence and his wounds healed by their love. Too late now! What had been done could not be undone; and the web which had been begun must be finished to the end.

Derwent, outwardly the most self-possessed of all, kissed his sister tenderly, but without speaking. Still holding her in one arm, he turned to his mother.

‘Good-bye, mother!’ he said in an altered voice—a voice wherein the love which until lately had been so strong an influence over his life, broke through the restraint and coldness which he tried to assume.

‘Good-bye: God bless you, my boy!’ she said, her feverish hand clasping his as if she never meant to let it loose again.

She held up her face for his kiss—his last.

‘My boy!’ she murmured almost as if in a dream.

He hesitated. He scarcely dared trust himself to the embrace—the last that he should ever give the mother whom he had loved so devotedly—surely no son ever loved a mother better! Then loosing his arm from Muriel, he turned to his mother and pressed her to him with his whole strength.

‘God be with you always, mother!’ he said in a whisper. ‘Mother, dear, dear, beloved mother!’

He kissed her passionately, again and again—her face between his two hands, and his eyes scanning her every feature.

‘And your father?’ she said beseechingly. ‘Will you not wish him good-bye, and kiss him too, Derwent?’

‘No,’ said the boy suddenly stiffened, putting her away; ‘I have no father. Mine died when he took a false oath to deceive me.’

He once more kissed Muriel, but he did not look at his mother again; then sprang into the carriage; and soon Owlett, Grantley Bourne, Hilda Machell, his former life, his family, and his very name—all were left behind, as he flung himself into the train that carried him like a swift current from the safe shores of the old familiar home into the vastness and vagueness of the unknown future.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LOST AND WON.

SITTING close together in a miserable triad, love and happiness failing them, save such as they could supply to each other, it seemed to Muriel as if she and her parents had touched the last boundaries of despair. Surely there was no beyond! She could not bear a greater load of misery than that which she was bearing now! Her lover lost, her brother gone away for ever, her father disgraced, and her mother broken-hearted—what was left? Her very gifts of youth and health were but additional circumstances of sorrow. She would be so glad to die now and have it all over; but she had, instead, such a long, long life of desolation to look forward to! It seemed as if it would never end.

She had done her duty to her father and mother; true; and she had behaved with honour to Arthur; and duty and honour are great things in their way and sound well in the ears of conscience. But, frankly—what kind of real comfort can they give to a young girl in the first wreck of her happiness? As well expect a mother to take comfort in the nice stitching of her darling’s shroud as that loving hearts should reconcile themselves to the loss of all that makes life dear, because that loss has been honourably accomplished and dutifully pursued.

But she would not sit down and gloom, she thought to herself. She would be the comfort of those with whom she had elected to remain, and they should never see what it had cost her. Poor papa! she would help to make him happy; and how sweet, and kind, and good he was—how worthy to be made happy, he and that dear, self-sacrificing, noble mother! She would be so good and

tender to them both, and make them feel that she shared their burden cheerfully, and in sharing, lightened it. She would always love Arthur; and she thought that he would always love her—but perhaps not now. If even he did not, she would never forget him; but of course after her letter she should never see him again, and—perhaps it was better not. And at this thought her eyes filled with tears which dropped silently on her hand. All the same, whatever her good resolves to be brave and cheerful as well as loving might be, the day was dark and dreary; and she could not affect to be cheerful with her brother's last kiss yet warm on her cheek, and her lover's silent acquiescence in her renunciation of him gnawing at her heart with as much surprise as pain. She thought he might have written; perhaps he would even yet; but he had had her note last night, and now it was past four in the afternoon of the next day. It was scarcely like him not to have answered—but surely he would!

She was thinking this, intermingled with speculations as to where Derwent was by now, and how strange it was to be without him, and how dreary the house was—as if a death were lying in it—when suddenly the sound of well-known feet was heard, the tones of a well-known voice echoed in the porch, and Arthur, asking for form's sake if the ladies were at home but setting aside the servant and the answer alike, came through the hall and into the room where the miserable trio were sitting.

For the first time since their engagement Muriel did not go to meet him. She rose from her seat hastily, but she turned her colourless face from her lover and looked at her father instead. Arthur too was pale, and evidently deeply moved. He was resolute, but not unfeeling; and if he had put himself in opposition to his mother, and preferred love to home, and the independence of a man who makes his own career to the maintenance of his present social position, he had not decided without pain or acted without sorrow. But he had decided and he had acted; and he was not one to be driven from his point or made to go back on himself.

'No, you must not meet me like this, Muriel,' he said, going up to her and holding out his hands. 'There is no reason why you should turn away from me.'

'But why you should turn from me,' she answered.

'I am the best judge of that,' he said gravely.

'No,' returned Muriel, that conversation with Lady Machell under the lime-trees coming back on her mind with photographic clearness; 'we must judge for you. I cannot bring disgrace upon you—what the world would call disgrace,' she added hastily,

throwing her arms round her father's neck—'but what I love and honour!'

'Your family will never consent to this marriage,' put in Mrs. Smith with a weary kind of air, like one tired of the struggle and desirous to hasten even the worst that she might lie down at last in peace. 'I made you understand my reluctance from the first; and I say now what I said then, that I cannot allow Muriel to be forced on your people against their will.'

Arthur turned to her and involuntarily drew himself up to his height. If his mother's opposition had not influenced him Mrs. Smith's was even less likely to stir him, save with a certain disdain at her presumption in making it. For with all his natural good temper, he was not very tolerant of opposition; and though in a certain sense democratic, yet it was the democracy of a man who held himself stronger than circumstance, and the one to give, not to take, the determining value of his surroundings. It was Muriel, not her people, with whom he had to deal; and the chances of their pleasure or displeasure had not been taken into his calculation at all.

'I have made my choice,' he said a little sternly; but his tone softened as he added—looking at the girl for whose sake he had just offended and renounced his mother—'Muriel is more to me than the whole world beside, and nothing can separate us but her own will.'

'And that must,' said Mrs. Smith; 'for your own sake we must not allow you to enter our family.'

'As I said before, I am the best judge of that,' he returned haughtily. 'I want no one to think for me or to arrange my affairs.'

'Poor boy!' said Mrs. Smith, her eyes filling with tears. 'We must protect you against yourself.'

The young man made an impatient gesture. At other times Mrs. Smith's maternal compassion would have pleased and warmed him; now it came with a galling sense of incongruity and interference, highly wrought as he was after that last scene with his mother, and feeling as he did that with all his love for Muriel he had need also of some of his strength to make him overcome the aversion which such a man as he naturally felt for such a man as Edmund Smith.

'All this is beside the question,' he said proudly. 'My business lies with Muriel only, and I will take my answer only from her, after her long and deliberate choice. What do you say, Muriel? will you marry me and come with me to Australia, or am I to go there alone—my career in England destroyed, my

old home and old affections given up, and the new life that I have marked out with you a melancholy delusion and a failure?’

‘I cannot leave papa and mamma,’ she answered, still not looking at him.

‘Do not all daughters leave their parents when they marry?’ he continued. ‘Why should you expect to make a life different from the rest?’

‘Theirs do not want them] so much as mine want me,’ she answered.

‘And do I count for nothing?’ he asked in a voice full of tender reproach. ‘Are your promises to me mere child’s play that may be taken up or laid down at will? We men, Muriel, love better than that.’

She trembled more than before, and turned impulsively as if to go to him. Then she looked again at her father and crept a few steps nearer still to him.

‘This is my duty,’ she said in a low voice. ‘Derwent has left us, and I must not leave them too.’

All the time Edmund Smith had not spoken. Suddenly he lifted up his head, and his long thin pointed fingers ceased their nervous tapping on the table.

‘Yes, you must leave us,’ he then said, speaking with dignity and command. ‘Go with Mr. Machell, Muriel, if he is willing to take you knowing what he does; it is your duty to go.’

‘And leave you and mamma?’ said Muriel, who was strung to sacrifice.

‘And leave us,’ he answered.

‘Papa, you must be always papa and my beloved to me!’ cried Muriel, as she had said once before, flinging herself into his arms and clinging to him. ‘I will be no man’s wife who does not love you and accept you. You are my father, and nothing in the whole world shall make me give you up!’

Arthur drew back a few steps. The Machell blood in him repudiated this forger, this convict; and for the instant he felt that his mother was right—no alliance was possible between the clean and the unclean; the son of Sir Gilbert Machell could not marry Edmund Smith’s daughter. He stood for a few moments, hesitating, pale, his teeth and lips set as his mother set hers; then he tossed back the hair from his forehead, cleared his eyes with his hand, and set his shoulders square as he went forward and gravely offered Edmund Smith his hand.

‘Let the past die,’ he said, making the one last supreme effort, the one last supreme sacrifice. ‘You are Muriel’s father and I

will not separate you. Come to Australia with us, and then my darling will be happy.'

'No,' said Edmund sadly, holding Muriel in his arms. 'I will not darken your lives by my presence. We will be enough for each other, my wife and I; only let Muriel write to us, and tell us of her happiness—do not cut us off from her love, and we shall be satisfied. It is as much as I ought to ask, and perhaps more than I have the right to expect.'

'Thank you,' said Arthur simply, but he held out his hand again and pressed that of the forger with friendly warmth. 'Now, Muriel,' he said, taking her by gentle force into his arms; 'the last barrier is broken down, and I see no other to come. Look at me, my darling, and let me hear you say once more that you love me—in the presence of your father and mother who shall be mine because they are yours. Muriel! you do love me well enough to leave all and come with me, do you not?'

'Yes, if I may still hold them,' said Muriel, weeping for sorrow and smiling for love. 'Mamma! you know how much I love him; and this is just why,' turning back to Arthur, 'I could give you up for your own good. I do not want you to lose all for me.'

'If I lose the whole world, I have you,' said Arthur fervently; 'and I am content with the exchange.'

It was a bright and crisp December day. The outward-bound ship had taken in the last of her cargo and the last of her passengers. Her decks were clear, her steam was up, and in a short time the order would be given for all strangers to leave, when she would slip her moorings and move out to sea. But a few precious moments still remained to the loving hearts on the eve of parting, perhaps for ever; and the deck was dotted about with groups of sorrowful friends come to 'see the last' of those without whom, it seemed to them now, life would be impossible. Down in the Machell state-room sat Edmund Smith and his wife, passing the last half-hour with the true and faithful heart that had fought the battle of love for them—and won it. Arthur was on deck, his eyes turned wistfully to the shore. He had parted from his mother in anger on her side, in sorrow on his; but to the last he hoped that she would give way now when no good was to be got by displeasure; and that she, as his father had done, would come to see him, and wish him God speed, and be reconciled to his choice so far as to recognize Muriel as her daughter. But he strained his eyes in vain. Among all the faces looking across on the decks of the outward-bound his mother's was not to be seen.

Presently a little stir took place among the loungers and



OUTWARD BOUND.

hangers-on about the ship, as a stout and stalwart woman pushed her way through the throng, and came on board, demanding 'Mr. Arthur Machell' in a loud voice, and with an air of command that seemed to include the very captain himself among her servants. She had a small parcel in her hands which she held with care, and which, so soon as she saw Arthur, she thrust into his as her greeting.

'I have brought you a little souvenir,' she said without preface or prefix. 'It is the best I had—the string of pearls which my mother wore at her wedding; which Baby wore at her first ball: and again, for the last time, at your brother's marriage. They are good of their kind, and will suit dear Dimples to perfection; and, as you see, they are full of associations. So here they are; and take care of them; for they are worth money, I can tell you. And now, how are you? and where is Dimples?'

'In her state-room, with her father and mother,' said Arthur, who was going on to thank Miss Dinah, as she deserved; but she cut him short with brusque but not impatient haste.

'Ah! is she? Then I'll go down and see her,' she said: 'just give her sweet face a kiss, and bid her good-bye and God bless her—and you too, Mr. Arthur; for of all the gallant young fellows that ever crossed my path, you are the most so. You are a man in your own right, Mr. Arthur, and I honour you for it!'

'Thank you for your good opinion, among all your other kindnesses,' said Arthur warmly. 'We were always good friends, Miss Dinah, were we not?'

'Always; and always will be,' she answered. 'If Baby had been a marrying girl, there is no one I should have liked so well for her as you. Thoroughly manly and wholesome—that is what I call you!'

The young fellow smiled a little sadly. If only his mother would have said half what this mere acquaintance said—felt half for him that she felt! His handsome face, smiling back into Miss Dinah's, grew suddenly pale and sorrowful as he looked again to the crowd standing about, but looked in vain for the only face that would have made it a living crowd for him.

He had nothing for it, however, but to hand Miss Forbes down the ladder to the state-room where Muriel and her parents sat hand in hand, and take his part in the talk which eddied in one unceasing circle wherever Miss Forbes found herself.

Then the last words were said, the last blessing breathed, and the last kiss given, as the strangers were ordered ashore, and the final preparations for leaving made. The father and mother, with Miss Forbes, as a kind of tower of strength, a few steps behind

them, stood watching the two standing by the bulwarks, arm-in-arm; the sweet pale face of Muriel full of smiles and tears together, as she now realized her loss and now her gain.

‘By the by,’ shouted Miss Forbes at the top of her voice; ‘you’ll find a small parcel from Mrs. Wilfrid inside those pearls, Dimples. It is to be opened when you get to Sydney, and not before. Good-bye, my dears.’

‘Good-bye!’ they returned. ‘Good-bye, mamma—dearest mamma—dear, dear papa!’ said Muriel, as the ship moved slowly away.

At that moment a carriage drove rapidly up; the door opened from the inside, and Lady Machell sprang out—just in time to see the boat put off to sea. Her repentance, her broken pride, her return of love—all had come too late; the boat, like the moment, had gone, and only distance, ever increasing, lay between the mother and the son whom she had so passionately loved and so bitterly discarded.

In vain that she called him by his name; in vain that she stretched out her arms and besought him to return:—the inexorable fate of circumstance had divided them, and the love which might have bridged over the chasm had returned only when it was powerless to bless.

Muriel’s eyes, like Arthur’s, had been searching the crowd for that one missing face which it would have made her melancholy happiness to see; but hidden in the deep shadow of a doorway, Derwent Meredith—Louis Meredith’s adopted son; that handsome young fellow who had flashed like a meteor into the courtly merchant’s world, coming no one knew whence and making all men wonder why—watched the going of the ship which bore away his sister without letting himself be seen. He watched it all like something seen on the stage, that deeply interested but did not personally concern him. He saw his father and mother come off the deck, clinging to each other as the only one each had left, while accompanied and in a manner guarded by the brave good soul who had stood by them in the face of the world, without wincing:—then he saw Lady Machell drive up, prepared to do what had been beyond his strength to compass—prepared to abandon her pride and to forgive. A thrill of passionate emotion passed over him, as these circumstances of his former life once more swept across his path; and when his father, who had wrought all this misery, crossed the deep shadow within which he stood, and his mother, who had been in one character the victim and in the other the executioner, turned her face as if instinctively to the darkness, he felt for the instant that he too must fling his

pride to the winds, and his future fortune with it, for the sake of that love for which the world is indeed well lost—nay, which is the world itself! But he controlled himself. He had his destiny to fulfil; and he contented himself by watching them and the vessel from the safety of his hiding place—his resolution as strong now as when it was first taken and acted on.

Lady Machell, broken, passionate, hysterical, wrung her hands and called out her son's name as if he could have heard her—as if indeed love and sorrow could command the elements and overrule the laws of nature. Arthur, with a sudden start of joy, waved his hand to her—something at his throat choking him—and he too feeling that she could hear and see him as he knew himself to be at this moment—loving, tender, grateful—her son once more in all that makes true sonship.

‘If I could but have blessed and kissed him!’ cried his mother with a burst of despair; ‘if I could but have told him that I loved and forgave him!’

Suddenly she turned and put both her hands into Edmund Smith's.

‘It will comfort him; he will understand me,’ she said, looking at the handsome figure standing bare-headed on the deck in the clear and frosty sunlight. ‘He will know now that I am reconciled to him!’

‘Mother! dear mother!’ said Arthur aloud; ‘God bless you for that! You too have sacrificed what was the dearest thing in life to you, and have given up your pride for love! God bless you, my mother—always my beloved mother! Ah my wife, my Muriel, at last I have gained all!’

(The End.)

Mademoiselle Rachel and the Bourgeois de Paris.

Tous les médecins sont gens d'esprit, et tous les gens d'esprit sont un peu médecins.—RIVAROL.

IN all times there have been to be met with amongst the Paris bourgeoisie men of a fine humour, of free and untrammelled mind, witty, subtle, sagacious, who have enjoyed opportunities of observing men and manners from a near point of view, familiarly. One of these men (with a rare simplicity and an absolute freedom from the mock modesty of self-depreciation) Doctor L. Véron, author of the '*Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*,' describes himself to be; remarking that, from the days of Charles the Sixth, there has always been a '*Bourgeois de Paris*,' who has kept a Journal—the faithful register of the events which the writer witnessed and related apart from all party spirit and prejudice. At the end of the sixteenth century during the troubles of the League, and under the reign of Henri Quatre, the Parisian L'Estoile took note of the events which happened before his eyes, and reproduced with verity and acumen the physiognomy of the men of his day. Under the Fronde, Patru and Taillement des Réaux appeared as lively narrators. Taillement des Réaux especially delighted to collect together, in a voluminous work, all the anecdotes, historiettes, and '*on dits*' of society concerning the celebrated personages of the day, giving proofs therein of a strong and solid judgment; whilst of late years the Society of the History of France has judged the Journal of the '*avocat*' Barbier under the reign of Louis the Fifteenth to be worthy of publication. Born in 1798, a witness of the last days of the Empire, of the Restoration, the monarchy of July, and the Republic, Dr. Véron steadily availed himself of the means of observation presented to him, and apart from all party prejudice he narrates without fear or favour the wonderful events which took place before him; the '*grosses affaires de tous les jours*,' as well as the '*petites intrigues de tous les quarts d'heure*:' and what years were those in which to have lived and written!—years of agitations, struggles, perils; years spent among men who were giants, whose violent and startling variations made existence an ever strange and stirring panorama. The six volumes of '*Mémoires*' are none too long to contain the record of days whose every hour was noteworthy, nor was the pen used to pourtray their marvellous occurrences otherwise than equal to the

task. Straightforward, earnest, perfectly free from any sort of affectation and full of a quaint humour, the Doctor visibly enjoys life, and also the task which he has set himself of describing his own with all its various situations and experiences. Beginning his career as a medical student, he attained by his own account a passable proficiency in his profession, without, however, meeting with the appreciation and success which he deserved; he does not forget to notice that he gained a momentary celebrity by his treatment of certain cerebral diseases in new-born infants, during which he subjected them to a process of boiling which proved in most cases highly beneficial. He humorously describes how every morning, thermometer in hand, he submitted for conscience-sake to share the steam-bath which he had ordered for his patients, from which they all emerged as red as lobsters; ingenuously adding, that not even the '*points d'orgue* of Madame Damoreau,' the sympathetic tones of '*Nourrit*,' or the expressive modulations of '*Duprez*,' could overpower in his remembrance the cries of torture emitted by these suffering morsels of humanity.

The Doctor dwells at length upon the value and interest of the study of medicine. 'It is full of precious treasures for the mind he reflects.' The study of the *man physical* leads rapidly to the practical observation of the *man moral*, and the Doctor alone can read what is written on the human visage. The study of medicine, whose extent is so great, and which comprehends so many different sciences, strongly exercises the memory and accustoms the mind to logical classifications and to well-digested and orderly methods; the study of medicine, in leading us to investigate and to define all the conditions of life—all the conditions of death—in rendering us witness to all the sufferings of humanity, all chances, all diseases, all forms of disorganisation, all curative processes, in obliging us to assist unarmed and powerless at those unforeseen accidents which kill slowly or kill like lightning, elevates the soul, gives force to the character, and inspires that wide-spreading philosophy which excludes neither the dogmas of religion nor the ardour of faith!

But with all this love of his profession—a profession which indeed it would be hard to overpraise—which with its

'faultless patience and unyielding will,
Beautiful gentleness and splendid skill,'

it is scarcely easy to find words sufficiently appreciative,—Dr. Véron renounces it, unwillingly indeed, and with a regret which was full of disappointment and bitterness. A single signal failure left him without hope of future success.

He resigned his long mornings in the Amphitheatre of the

Rue du Bac à la Pitié, his happy journeys with a band of chosen associates to prosecute botanical researches, his meetings with fellow students in hospitals, and by the bedsides of the sick and suffering—‘but if,’ he laments, ‘it costs much to gain the title of Doctor, it costs quite as much to suppress and efface it; and in France—but only in France—whilst a lawyer is supposed to be qualified for any position, a doctor is thought to be fit for nothing but to haunt hospitals and to visit patients.’

However this may be, a literary career was still open to our Doctor; he became the editor of the ‘Revue de Paris,’ and began a career of art-criticism, during which it was his duty and his pleasure to encourage obscure talent, to protect the tender glow of rising reputations, and to ensure a certain remuneration to compositions which were not already sealed by the favourable verdict of public opinion.

Ancient literature from Homer to Marmontel—the great names, the great works of a former age examined by the light of impartial and disinterested criticism with a view to a more comprehensive and conscientious survey of the literature of our own days; foreign literature, through the medium of authorised and faithful translations; modern literature at a moment when a new epoch was about to follow a great political crisis,—the ‘Revue de Paris’ promised in the prospectus this rich harvest of thought. Untiring in his endeavours for its success, Dr. Véron describes with a graphic pen his ‘Coursés Littéraires du Matin,’ his visits to Victor Hugo, Merimée, Casimir Delavigne, Scribe, Sainte-Beuve, casually remarking that he found the first condition of literary success to consist in, at least, two pairs of horses in his stables, with which to besiege the doors of celebrated authors, in spite of knowing that they had generally placed a work before it was finished, and sometimes even before it had been begun.

The moment was favourable to literature and art: the great Napoleon, whose mind comprehended most things, was a lover of letters for their own sake, and also for the sake of the lustre which they conferred upon his reign; he would have liked to govern genius as he governed his old battalions, and to have covered himself with its reflected glory; there continued after the Revolution of 1830, and after the Restoration, a general feeling in favour of literary progress, a feeling which grew and strengthened in spite of all political troubles; and during the reign of Louis Philippe, who was a true lover of art, although suspected of entertaining what were called *des goûts bourgeois* in the matter of painting, there was a steady increase of cultivated taste, and the most generous protection was accorded to its votaries.

The 'Opéra Comique' saw the revival of its best days under the monarchy of July, and amongst the greatest events of the time was the appearance at the Théâtre Français of Mademoiselle Rachel.

'It was on a lovely summer evening, June 12, 1838,' says Dr. Véron, 'that, in search of shade and solitude (everything can be found in Paris, if one only knows where to look for it), I entered the Théâtre Français between eight and nine o'clock. There were four spectators in the orchestra, I made the fifth. My looks were fixed upon the stage by a new face, a face full of expression: the brow prominent, the eye dark, deep set, and full of fire; the figure fragile in the extreme, but full of grace in the attitudes and gestures, moreover a rich-toned, sympathetic, and above all a cleverly managed voice roused all my attention, which was more disposed at the moment to indolence than to admiration. This new face, this deep-set eye, this fragile figure, this cleverly managed voice was Mademoiselle Rachel.'

The keenly appreciative Doctor, who recognised at a glance the merits which the less acute critics required time to discover, could not rest till he had excited in all his literary acquaintance a similar state of enthusiasm. For his own part, he describes that the success of his Jewish Melpomene became the event of his life; that before saying good morning to his friends, he enquired if they had seen 'her' in 'Horace' or in 'Andromaque,' and when the greater number, not knowing what he was talking about, would naïvely confess their ignorance, he would launch out in the most vehement invective, not sparing any amount of reproach and vituperation. His own mind was made up—the joy and delight of his summer were assured; his emotions as an *habitué* of the Théâtre Français replaced the pleasures of the fields, the incidents and the variety of travel. But the dog-days were hardly favourable to the encouragement of theatrical talent; the Doctor made few converts. Mademoiselle Rachel recited to empty benches until cooler, when the house began to fill—the public showed signs of common sense, and in the parts of 'Monime' in 'Mithridate,' and in 'Hermione,' the young tragedian obtained a perfect triumph, and an almost frantic popularity. The enthusiasm which she excited is described by Jules Janin, to whose pen it is said belongs the credit of turning the tide of fortune in favour of the *débutante*, in words which were everywhere copied and quoted.

'The poor child, pale, slender, and ill-fed, on whom ancient tragedy leans like blind and bloody Œdipus upon Antigone, alone suffices to bring crowds to the lately deserted Théâtre Français. The task of resuscitating this glorious body, of recalling the illustrious exiles, of cleaning the Augean stables of their literary

rubbish, of restoring life, thought, motion, passion, interest, to the imperishable masterpieces that for lack of an interpreter, for lack of that spark of sacred fire which emanates from the soul and lights the glance, were dying; this, indeed, was an immense task; and when we reflect that it is undertaken by a child, ignorant of the things of this world, who knows nothing of poetry, of history, of the passions she delineates, or even of the language she speaks, we admire and wonder, and we ask how is it that a task, deemed impracticable should have been accomplished with such apparent ease, and by so weak an instrument. The reason is that this child possesses that which is superior to science—*inspiration*. She brought with her at her birth, the something divine—*mens divini*—that feeds poetry. She put her trust in the great masters whom none of those around her trusted; she did not despair of the masterpieces insulted by the present generation; her very boldness carried her through; her faith saved her, her natural good sense preserved her from all declamation.

‘She had conquered her domain she had done more than conquer it, she had discovered it—and now reigned there a sovereign.’

The Théâtre Français, which had been steadily declining, rose once more high in the zenith of public popularity. She brought into the house a sum of six thousand francs on every night she played, and the modest salary of four thousand francs per annum, at which she was primarily engaged, was voluntarily raised by the management. All the rank and fashion then assembled in Paris vied with each other in doing honour to the transcendent genius which had now become acknowledged, without a single dissentient voice. Her extreme youth—the angularity, not to say scragginess of her figure—her features, too small and delicate for stage effect—even a certain harshness in the tones of her voice—were no longer subjected to cavil or criticism; safely, although suddenly, she found herself placed upon the pedestal of public opinion.

The unalterable sadness of her face, the flashes of her jealousy and her despair, the withering tempest of her scorn, the wild distracted tumult of her eyes, created an impression which those who never saw Mademoiselle Rachel in ‘Phèdre,’ in ‘Andromaque,’ and in ‘Les Horaces,’ can have but a faint idea. It was the sublime ideal of passion, far removed from the stormy violence of melodrama, strangely differing from any ordinary tendency of common woes. It was the embodiment of that dramatic power which invests rage, scorn, triumph, pride, every torture, and every malignity which can possess the human heart with an incomparable dignity; the perfect representation of the conflict of a soul torn and wasted with pagan crime and pagan remorse. But here that

power came to an end. Mademoiselle Rachel was unable adequately to render any softer feeling: she failed when she attempted to pourtray tenderness, love in the more perfect acceptation of the word, or the charm of sensibility. It has even been objected to that famous scene in the fourth act of 'Les Horaces,' where her attitude alone without a word from her lips is such as to convey to the audience the agony which she endures whilst listening to the details of her lover's death (the grandest piece of face-acting ever perhaps displayed), that although the effect was electric, it produced terror rather than tears. 'Her pantomime in this scene,' says Dr. Véron, 'has a splendid effect, and I have it from herself that she took the idea and the means of execution of that pantomime from an attack of physical disturbance. She had just been bled, and simply reproduced upon the stage the profound exhaustion and the painful feelings of threatened syncope which she then experienced.'

Without any exaggeration it has been said of more than one tragedian that she had tears in her voice.

La Champmeslé, Adrienne Lecouvreur, La Duchesnois possessed this passionate and touching attribute. Mademoiselle Rachel astounded, electrified: her talent reached and wholly satisfied the intellect, but it left the heart, if not cold, at least tranquil and without illusions.

In the summing up of a flattering but still honest and impartial criticism the Bourgeois de Paris confesses that had he written his 'Mémoires' in 1838 he could hardly have contained within reasonable limits his almost frantic admiration of the Rachel of that day; 'but' he adds, with a touching and simple pathos, 'I have grown old and she has become rich, and nothing modifies the emotions so surely as riches and years.'

Sad also is the reflection that, of all the transitory successes of life, of all its fleeting triumphs, of all the applause, flattery, glory, which form the crown of exceptional talent, the success, triumph, applause, flattery, glory, which follow upon the steps of the actor are the vainest and the most transitory. Poets, historians, novelists, artists leave behind them works which may prove immortal, and which at all events may be supposed to exist after the memory of themselves as living men and women has faded away, but when the curtain falls upon the actor's last representation he disappears for ever. The voice whose slightest intonation softened and subjugated, the look which thrilled, the eloquent silence which enchained, vanish into dim distance as soon as they have passed from among us, leaving behind them little more than the faint and perishing tradition '*that such things were!*'

rubbish, of restoring the
the imperishable mastery
lack of that spark of
and lights the glance
task; and when we re-
norant of the things of
history, of the passions
speaks, we admire and
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apparent ease, and by
this child possesses the
She brought with her
divinior—that feeds
whom none of those
masterpieces insulted
ness carried her the
sense preserved her

Derod's Daughter.
chosen land,
bold command
grace;
mighty wight,
of might,
hall
festival,
and peer,
to keep;
draughts were deep,
their cheer.

'She had conquered
it, she had discovered
The Théâtre Français
once more high in
into the house a
played, and the man
at which she was
management. All
vied with each other
which had now her
voice. Her extreme
of her figure—her
even a certain lustre
subjected to cavil
herself placed upon
The unaltered
and her despair
distracted turn
who never saw
and in 'Les Hor
ideal of passion
drama, strange
woes. It was
invests rage, the
nity which en
dignity: the
and wasted will

how was bound,
healths went round
their mirth;
every tongue,
praise was sung,
on earth.

waved apace,
and in place
of youth,
as sire and lord,
ward
and truth.

surface of Ind,
soughts to bind
brought myrrh;
incense and spice,
quaint device,
all, and fur.

which maid
as half afraid,
place—
young child;
grew smooth and mild
that face.
scarlet red,
which being opened,
the king
gems adorn
of sharpest thorn
opal ring.



FAIR MARIAMNE'S YOUNGEST CHILD.

The Ballad of King Herod's Daughter.

In Jewry, God's first chosen land,
 King Herod ruled and held command
 By Roman Cæsar's grace ;
 Full fierce he was, a haughty wight,
 And of his hands a man of might,
 As fitted Edom's race.

Now on a day within his hall
 King Herod held high festival,
 With many a knight and peer,
 Because his birthday was to keep ;
 The laugh was loud, the draughts were deep,
 Right royal was their cheer.

With ivy-wreaths each brow was bound,
 And thick and fast the healths went round
 As madder grew their mirth ;
 The rough red wine loosed every tongue,
 And loud King Herod's praise was sung,
 They hailed him god on earth.

Then, as the daylight waned apace,
 There came a goodly band in place
 Of maidens and of youth,
 Who claimed the king as sire and lord,
 And came in duteous accord
 To vow their love and truth.

And one brought vestiture of Ind,
 And one brought carkanets to bind
 The brows, and one brought myrrh ;
 And this brought frankincense and spice,
 And that one robes of quaint device,
 Gold, sendal, pall, and fur.

And last of all a little maid
 Knelt trembling down, as half afraid,
 Before the dais place—
 Fair Mariamne's youngest child ;
 And Herod's brow grew smooth and mild
 For gazing on that face.

She bore a cloth of samite red,
 Close wrapped, which being openèd,
 She laid before the king
 A wonder crown—no gems adorn
 Its rim, but rays of sharpest thorn
 Make up the royal ring.



FAIR MARIAMNE'S YOUNGEST CHILD.

Uprose her sire with wrath distressed :
' Forsooth, fair maid, a goodly jest !
What gift is this ye bring ?
What ! am I mocked in mine own hall
By thee, my favoured child of all ?
Full loathly is this thing ! '

And she right meekly answer made,
' No doubt upon my love be laid,
Nor on my gift no scorn ;
No wealth of gold nor costly gem
Made ever noble diadem
As is this crown of thorn.

' For, lo, in Jewry on this day
A maiden on her breast shall lay
A Son, who shall be King ;
And He no other crown shall wear
Than such an one as this I bear,
Yet ruleth everything.

' Yea, ruleth earth and ruleth seas,
And cometh in no palaces ;
Yea, ruleth beast and man,
And hath not where to lay His head,
And of His subjects' hate is sped,
And goeth for a span :

' And cometh back—and is not seen !
Was, is, and evermore hath been,
Dead, and alive again.
And whoso would be king in truth
Must not despise this crown of ruth,
But of its girth be fain.

' And hear thou me, my lord and sire,
Nor set thine heart to scorn and ire,—
Full goodly is thy state,
But so thou cross that King in aught,
Thy force is weak, thy skill is naught,
His might must thine abate ! '

Loud laughed King Herod scornfully :
' I ween, fair maiden, verily,
Thy wits are wandering !
Close cell and penance best may suit
Thy case ; behold now what a fruit
Upon thy thorn doth spring !

' What, ho ! bear forth this crazy maid,
And be her limbs in darkness laid,
Let scourges try her will !
Perchance her boasted King shall come
To rule in Jewry and in Rome,
And loose her from this ill.

' But till he come, thou fool, believe
 Thou shalt have goodly time to grieve,
 And cry for thy release;
 And who shall aid?—Whoso would wear
 This torment should be *débonnair*,
 A perfect prince of peace!

' Cry thou for champion to the stars,
 And mourn behind thy prison bars
 The day thou mockedst me!—
 Full tight the gentle maid they bound,
 And faster still the healths went round,
 And wilder grew their glee.

And so they bore her off, and kept
 In dungeon, where she lay and wept
 Until her heart-strings cracked.
 So died she in her early youth,
 Whereof full many men had ruth,
 And Herod's heart was racked.

For evermore her voice would sing,
 At midnight, of that mighty King,
 When silence ruled around;
 And evermore must Herod weep,
 When others bouned themselves to sleep,
 For thinking on that stound.

O crown most royal, crown most rare,
 By King made precious past compare,
 By Christ immortal worn!
 God send us strength and give us grace,
 Despising pomp and pride of place,
 To bow before the thorn!

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

Some Animal Architects.

BY DR. ANDREW WILSON.

ONE of the most interesting departments of natural history study is that which devotes itself to the elucidation of the manner in which living beings utilize the various materials of the universe in which they exist, for purposes of protection, for offence or defence, or for food, raiment, and the common necessities of life. Whilst man, in virtue of his superior powers of adapting himself to his surroundings, may excel lower forms in respect of the variety of means and substances he calls to aid in the advancement of his interest and comfort, it must at the same time be admitted that he is frequently surpassed by the unerring skill with which a particular product is utilized and manufactured by his lower neighbours. Indeed, as a rule, the elegance and quality of the products of animal life at large are found to be apparently out of all proportion to the means by which they were elaborated; and in very many instances the lower animal accomplishes, in the way of direct and unassisted manufacture, a work which man may, after all, but imperfectly imitate by the aid of cunning artifice and mechanical contrivance. The production of a silken thread by the 'spinnerets' of the spider or caterpillar is apparently an act of the simplest possible character, viewed in regard to the apparatus and actions which engage in its manufacture; but placed in relation to human contrivance, we may well fail to conceive the delicacy of the spinning-jenny or more modern machine which could evolve a product of like nature. The instinct of the animal, blind and automaton-like as it may be, certainly holds its own in respect of the perfection and results of its work, when compared with the fruits of intelligence, and with the highest exercise of experience and acquired art.

In no phase of their operation do the vital acts and functions of animals present us with greater profusion of detail than in the consideration of the ways and means adopted for the construction of various portions of their bodies from materials derived from the outer world. The power possessed by living beings, not only of laying hold of such materials, but of duly selecting and appropriating such substances as are best adapted to the work in hand, constitutes, after due reflection, one of the marvels of life at large. Nowhere can we see this marvellous power of selection better exemplified than in certain of the lowest forms of animal life, as

representing one extremity of the scale of being, and in man as illustrating the highest grade in the ranks of animal society. The waters of our oceans, both at the surface and in their depths, are inhabited by beings of microscopic size, and of a marvellous simplicity of body. Each of these minute animals consists of a speck of structureless, jelly-like substance—the protoplasm or sarcode of the physiologist. Placed under the microscope, these living particles may be seen to live and move, to eat and digest, as do their higher neighbours. Compared with the latter, they may be noted to present singular and paradoxical exceptions to the ordinary rules of living and being, since they are thus observed to live, literally without possessing any apparent structures to carry on the functions of life. Such are the beings known to naturalists as the Foraminifera and the Radiolarians. Between these two groups no absolute distinction, as far as their living substance is concerned, can be drawn. Yet that distinctions may and do exist is perfectly obvious, if we consider the results of the life in each case. The particle of living jelly we term a Foraminifer takes from the water of the sea a proportion of the lime which exists dissolved in that medium, and from this lime moulds and forms a shell, in which it protects its soft, semi-fluid body. The neighbour-particle we name a Radiolarian, existing side by side with the Foraminifer, selects flint as its special material from its native waters, and builds a shell of flint, exhibiting in many cases outlines of mathematical nature, and shapes of the most graceful and elegant kind. Thus there must exist, even in such simple and primitive organisms, not only a selective power of the exact nature of which we are utterly ignorant, but a further exercise, in the building of a shell, of a power of whose exact direction and extent we know absolutely nothing.

But if the puzzle of life and of animal architecture is so difficult of solution in these lower forms, it is found to present no plainer aspects when offered for investigation in the personality and frame of even the highest being. Regarded from an aspect similar to that in which the denizens of the depths have just been studied, man's existence is seen to comprehend phases of equally puzzling nature. No law of life rests on a firmer basis than that which maintains that the act of living and being is associated with constant change and alteration, and that the wear and tear of life demand proportional repair. Through each tissue of the body, the life-renewing blood is therefore continually being distributed. The muscle, wearied in the actual work of the body, recruits itself from the supply of nourishment thus afforded it; nerves renew their strength from the same source; and even thought itself thus

becomes related in a distinct manner to the material blood from which the thinking brain derives the wherewithal to carry on its work. Nor is this all. It is not only the case that each tissue derives from the blood the necessary matter to replace that which has been lost and expended in the work of life. Each tissue, it must be noted, also takes from the common stream of nourishment the materials necessary for the building up of new substance. From the blood, bone selects the materials necessary for the formation of new bone; nerve from the same source gathers matter for the production of new nerve-tissue; muscle therefrom elaborates new muscle; cells of wondrously diverse kind, like buyers of many nations in a common market, select from the blood the special food or pabulum suited to their wants, and therefrom manufacture new cells—in short, the process of growth in man and in all animals of higher grade, exemplifies the results of many varied operations effected by the tissues and organs of the body upon the common material offered to them, in the shape of the nutrient blood. How this property of ‘selection’ is exercised, or what is its exact nature, science knows not as yet. But the possession of this remarkable property of selecting and using appropriate material in the actions of life, explain it how we may, constitutes one of the most consistent and clearly defined distinctions which can be drawn between the world of life and the great encompassing universe of non-living matter.

The foregoing remarks may serve to elucidate in some degree the essential nature of a process whereby certain animal forms not only build up structures of massive kind in modern seas, but through which they have been enabled to effect change and alteration of no ordinary extent on our earth, in past epochs of its history. With the coral-animals everyone must be familiar as far as the mere name of these beings is concerned; and doubtless few people are unfamiliar with some variety or other of the substance manufactured by the animals just named. As presenting a subject for a brief investigation into some curious phases, not only of animal life, but of physical history also, the coral-animals stand possibly without a rival; and as illustrative of a veritable race of animal architects, these beings have no equal, either in respect of the variety or the magnitude of their operations.

Probably no portion of the domain of the naturalist has been more plentifully overrun with error than the special territory which includes the coral-polypes as its tenants. To begin with, errors in name are of plentiful occurrence, the most common instance of this kind being found in the erroneous designation of ‘insects’ often bestowed on the coral-animals. The name ‘insect’

was no doubt applied in a very loose and general sense in bygone days. But it is the first duty of science to be correct in its nomenclature, and as suggestive of a relationship to the familiar 'insects' the use of this term, as applied to the coral-architects, is of grossly erroneous nature. Ere now, also, the fishes of the sea have been credited with the work of building coral-reefs, and the vague term 'animalcules' was used in former days to indicate the nature of the workers in coral. Nor have poets been behind in propagating erroneous ideas concerning the nature and work of the coral-animals. As Professor Dana remarks, Montgomery's 'Pelican Island' contains statements which a scientific man at least can hardly excuse on the ground of poetical license. 'The poetry of this excellent author,' says Dana, 'is good, but the facts nearly all errors—if literature allows of such an incongruity. There is no "toil," no "skill," no "dwelling," no "sepulchre," in the coral-plantation, any more than in a flower-garden; and as little are the coral-polypes shapeless worms that "writhe and shrink their tortuous bodies to grotesque dimensions."' The coral-animals, in short, manufacture or secrete the coral-substance as a part of their life-action and nature, just as a flower manufactures its colour, or as a higher animal forms its bones. The living acts of the coral-animal include the formation of coral as an essential and natural duty, and not as a work of a merely accidental or occasional kind.

It is noteworthy that the animal nature of coral was first discovered only some hundred and fifty years ago. Such an assertion may appear somewhat strange to the ordinary reader, considering the universally admitted animal nature of the substance. But it must be remembered that the distinctions between animals and plants have only in comparatively late years been duly investigated; and the habit of placing reliance upon external form and outward appearance as a means of distinction, certainly tended to place the plant-like and rooted corals as veritable plants before the eyes of naturalists in past days. The appearance of a piece of red coral in its living state, for example, is decidedly plant-like. We see a branching structure consisting of a hard, central axis of coral covered over with a soft skin or living bark, imbedded in which numerous little beings, each possessing a circle of eight fringed arms or feelers, are to be noted. These little beings are the coral-polypes. That they are sensitive is proved by their habit of shrinking within the living bark, of which they form part, when irritated or alarmed; and as the appearance of the polypes is flower-like to a high degree, it is not surprising to find that the Count de Marsigli should have described and figured the sensitive 'flowers' of the coral 'plant' in his celebrated work entitled 'La

Physique de la Mer,' published in 1706. The ideas which prevailed at that date regarding the exact structure of the supposed coral 'plant,' however, were of improved kind as compared with prior conceptions of its nature. Ovid states the popular belief of the classic period when he relates that the coral was a sea-weed which existed in a soft state so long as it remained in the sea, but had the curious property of becoming hard on exposure to the air. Messer Boccone, in the 17th century, was the first to refute this idea, and showed that, although the coral 'plant' possessed a soft outer bark, it was in reality a permanently hard structure even in its native waters. It so happened, that about 1723 a pupil of Count Marsigli's, Jean André de Peysonnel by name, obtained a commission from the French Academy of Sciences to study the coral 'plants' in their native seas. Proceeding to Marseilles and to the North African Coast, Peysonnel soon found reason to alter the views with which he had been indoctrinated respecting the nature of the living parts in the coral. Studying the red coral attentively, this observer said that the coral 'flowers' of Marsigli were true animals, and were in fact closely related to the familiar but plant-like 'orties' or sea-anemones, which Réaumur in 1710 had shown to be animals. In his remarks on the coral-polypes, Peysonnel compared the coral-animals to 'une petite ortie ou poulpe.' And that the comparison of the coral-polype to the 'ortie' or anemone is a perfectly just one, is proved by the fact, that the zoologist of to-day selects the latter animals as the type of the great class of coral-producing animals. It is no easier task to root out and supplant long-established beliefs in science than in the ordinary affairs of life; and Peysonnel found to his cost that to play the rôle of a conscientious observer and reformer is by no means an easy or enviable task. Réaumur, whose discovery of the animal nature of the sea-anemones might have been supposed to have given him a peculiar aptitude for criticizing Peysonnel's observations after a just fashion, was one of the first to condemn the young student of Marseilles, and other Academicians followed in wholesale condemnation of the revolutionary tendencies of Peysonnel's discovery. Disgusted with the treatment shown towards him by the Academicians whose accredited emissary he was, Peysonnel sailed for the Antilles, engaged in the profession of a naval surgeon, and forwarded to the Royal Society of London the results of his further researches on the coral-polypes. To this day Peysonnel's observations remain in manuscript in the library of the Natural History Museum at Paris; but it is satisfactory to learn that the ill-treated *savant* lived long enough to find the truth and worth of his discoveries fully admitted. Certain experiments, published in 1744,

upon fresh-water polypes led to the recognition of these plant-like beings as true animals. The lists of plant-like forms were next overhauled, with the result of demonstrating the animal nature of many organisms which were formerly included within the botanist's domain, and amongst these new-found animals were the coral-polypes, whose exact nature Peyssonnel had demonstrated many years before.

The animal nature of the coral-producing beings having thus been demonstrated, their place in the animal series may in the next instance be briefly referred to. As already remarked, the common sea-anemone of our coasts may be selected as the type of the coral-animals—as far as the structure of its soft parts is concerned. The anemones, as every seaside visitor knows, do not manufacture or secrete any hard skeleton; but if we suppose that such a power existed in these familiar denizens of our coasts, and that, taking lime from the sea-water, they elaborated such material into hard parts of various kind, we should possess a broad but essentially correct idea of the nature of any coral-polype. We thus note the incongruity of applying such a name as a coral 'insect' to these animals; whilst we can also realize the justness of Peyssonnel's descriptions. The coral-polype is a little lime-secreting anemone, possessing a central mouth surrounded by arms or tentacles, the latter capable of withdrawal on being irritated. Peyssonnel's name of 'poulpe,' also given to the coral-animals, is seen to be equally applicable, this name 'poulpe' being derived, like the English polype, from the Latin 'polypus,' a term meaning 'many-footed' and which was given to the cuttlefishes—these latter animals, like the anemones and coral polypes, having numerous arms arranged around a central mouth.

Such being the relations of the coral-polypes to the sea-anemones, certain of the more important differences they exhibit from their familiar representatives may be noted. The common groups of sea-anemones exist, like most other animals, in a single and simple condition, that is to say, each animal is entirely independent of and disconnected from its neighbours. The reverse, however, is the case with the coral-polypes; for amongst these animals there exists a marked tendency to produce compound colonies or aggregated masses of animals, which, curiously enough, originate from single and simple forms by a veritable process of budding. Some coral-polypes are, like the sea-anemones, single in their nature. No better example of a solitary coral-polype could be cited than the little Devonshire cup-coral or *Carophyllia*, one of the few lingering remnants of British coral-life. The cup-coral appears before us as a veritable anemone, possessing the power of elaborating an internal

living skeleton; and the foreign mushroom-corals or *Fungia* may also be cited as representatives of simple corals. The branch of red coral and the vast majority of reef-building and other corals exhibit, however, the true characteristics of their race, in that they are of compound nature, and form in the reef-building corals, by a process of continuous and connected growth, masses of immense size and extent. Indeed, it is this feature of constant and connected production which gives to these animals their characteristic power of forming huge monuments of stable and enduring kind on the surface of the earth. It may appear somewhat strange to speak of budding in connection with the animal-form. The process, however, not only occurs in the class of coral-polypes, but is represented in the nearly allied zoophytes, and in several other groups of animals. The history of a great mass of coral may be thus traced from its earliest stage, when an egg liberated from some member of an already formed colony, settled down, attached itself, and produced a single anemone-like polype. This solitary polype next began to bud, and so produced a series of new and connected beings; and if we suppose the budding process to be in turn repeated by each member of the colony, we can readily understand how the compound organism should attain in due time a growth of almost unlimited extent. Many corals also provide for their increase by a process of *fission*, that is, of simple division of the body-substance into new individuals. The occurrence of this process in the corals is not surprising when we consider that the common sea-anemone may be divided artificially, with the result of producing one or more new individuals. Some of the star-corals or *Astræas*, of the Pacific, grow into great stony hemispheres through this method of increase, these masses frequently possessing a diameter of from 10 to 15 feet. Life and death in the living coral, to use Mr. Dana's words, may be regarded as 'going on together, *pari passu*.' As new living parts are developed, the older parts die, but necessarily leave behind their coral-substance to form enduring parts of the mass. In some cases, according to the author just quoted, 'a polyp, but a fourth of an inch long, or even shorter, is finally found at the top of a stem many inches in height. . . The tissues that once filled the cells of the rest of the corallum have dried away, as increase went on above. . . The coral-zoophyte may be levelled by transported masses swept over it by the waves; yet, like the trodden seed, it sprouts again, and continues to grow and flourish as before.' Thus the fertility of the coral-polypes may be regarded as of double nature, since we find that each member of a coral colony is capable—first, of giving origin to eggs, each of which when duly developed represents the initiatory stage in the production of a new colony;

and secondly, of increasing each individual colony by an unlimited process of budding or fission.

As features in the general structure of corals, which deserve a brief notice by way of conclusion to their personal history, so to speak, we may refer to the main differences observable in the coral structure, and to certain variations in the chemical composition of the coral. A piece of red coral exemplifies one of the two chief varieties of coral, the coral-substance forming in this instance a solid central axis, on the outside of which the living bark consisting of numerous polypes is situated. In this and similar cases, all traces of the separate coral-polypes disappear when the living matter is washed away. But in the second variety of coral structure, well exemplified by the great reef-building corals, the coral-substance is outside the living parts, each little polype being contained within a cell which it has secreted and formed. This latter mode of growth produces the massive solid corals, on the presence and increase of which the formation of reefs depends; the more delicate and branching species being formed after the type of the red coral and its neighbours. That lime is the chief element represented in the coral-substance may be readily inferred from the preceding remarks. A few corals, however, exhibit a composition in which lime plays an altogether secondary part. Thus the *Isis*, or mare's-tail coral of the Indian Ocean and elsewhere, consists of alternate joints of horny and limy matter; whilst in another group, represented by the *Gorgonias* or 'Sea Fans,' the coral is entirely composed of horny material. The essential details comprised in the general history of the coral-polypes may be briefly summarized by way of introduction to the investigation of their actual work in reef-formation, by asserting each coral-animal to be in all essential details of structure a sea-anemone; and by the further statements, that the coral-polypes differ from the anemones in respect of their ability to form an internal or external skeleton usually consisting of limy matter, and that they increase indefinitely by a process of budding or of division, and thus give rise to connected colonies. Bearing these details in mind, the history of the operations of these animals will be readily understood.

Two important points in the life of the coral-polypes demand attention by way of introduction to the general history of their architectural operations. Like all other living beings, the coral-animals require certain special conditions as those of their normal existence. In the case before us, the two conditions demanded are a certain *temperature* and a certain *depth* of sea; these conditions constituting the environments, as it were, of coral life. The question of temperature is a highly important one, inasmuch as

the condition of the sea as to warmth will be found to regulate the distribution in space of the corals. The geography of these animals, in short, is bounded and defined by lines or degrees of temperature; and the statement that reef-building corals will not as a rule flourish and grow in seas the temperature of which falls below 68° Fahr., may be taken as a summary of what has been ascertained on this point. We must therefore look to equatorial seas, as those in which the typical development of reef-building corals occurs; and a ready mode of stating the broad facts of the distribution of coral life consists in our selecting the Equator as a natural centre of our globe, and in measuring off a band of 1,800 miles in breadth on each side of that line. A broad band or area some 3,600 miles in breadth, encompassing our globe, and having the equator for its centre, will thus be found to include in its course the chief regions of coral growth. But, as Mr. Dana remarks, whilst the distribution of corals depends to a very great extent upon temperature, 'regional peculiarities' also 'exist that are not thus accounted for.'

Whilst the Pacific and Indian Oceans form great repositories of coral-reefs existing within the limits just mentioned, and whilst the Red Sea, the N.E. coast of Australia, and the coast of Florida also exemplify great areas of coral development, certain other oceanic tracts exist, from which coral-reefs are wholly absent. Mr. Darwin thus informs us that 'no coral-reefs were observed during the surveying voyages of the "Beagle" on the west coast of South America south of the Equator, or round the Galapagos Islands. It appears also,' he continues, 'that there are none on this coast north of the Equator.' The western coast of Africa is singularly free from coral-reefs; and it may be laid down as a rule of the widest possible kind, that coral-reefs are not found near the estuaries of great rivers, a result clearly due to the mixed or brackish character of the water in such situations. It may be shown that the absence of reefs on the western coasts of South America and Africa is due to the lower temperature which prevails in these areas, but it is possible that other causes—to be hereafter noted—less dependent on temperature or on the sea itself, may more feasibly explain the non-development of coral life in certain regions.

The condition included under the head of *depth* is, if anything, a more important item in the maintenance of coral life and growth than that of heat. If we cite evidence on this point, we may ascertain that the subject of the depth at which corals live received attention from more than one naturalist in past days. The French explorers, Quoy and Gaimard, in their report

of observations published in 1824, were probably the first who ventilated the opinion that the living reef-building corals existed in *limited depths of sea*. Foster and the earlier navigators assumed that, as coral-reefs were found in depths of literally unfathomable kind, the coral-polypes grew from the abysses of ocean. But Quoy and Gaimard concluded from observations made in two voyages, that a depth of from thirty to thirty-six feet represented the zone of coral life. Ehrenberg set the limit from which living coral was fished at six fathoms, and Mr. Stutchbury, another observer, maintained that a depth of sixteen or seventeen fathoms might be regarded as the furthest limit of the living reef-forming corals. Mr. Darwin concludes 'that in ordinary cases, reef-building polypifers do not flourish at greater depths than between twenty and thirty fathoms, and rarely at above fifteen fathoms.' And Mr. Dana remarks, that 'there is hence little room to doubt that *twenty fathoms* may be received as the ordinary limit in depth of reef-corals in the tropics.' In answer to a suggestion that 'reefs may possibly rise from very great depths through the means of small corals first making a platform for the growth of the stronger kinds,' Mr. Darwin says, 'this, however, is an arbitrary supposition; it is not always remembered that in such cases there is an antagonistic power at work, namely, the decay of organic bodies when not protected by a covering of sediment or by their own rapid growth. We have,' he adds, 'moreover, no right to calculate on unlimited time for the accumulation of small organic bodies into great masses. . . . As well might it be imagined that the British Seas would in time become choked up with beds of oysters, or that the numerous small coral-lines off the inhospitable shores of Terra del Fuego would in time form a solid and expansive coral-reef.'

The causes of the limitation in depth of corals may be summed up by recognising the necessity of a due supply of light and air for maintaining the vitality of the living animals. The living polypes require light as a condition for the exercise of their vital functions, and they no less imperatively demand a due supply of the vivifying oxygen; these essentials for vitality being obtainable only in surface-waters, or within a limited depth in the ocean. Recognising the settled and affirmed nature of these two conditions of coral life, we may next proceed to examine the curiously complicated problem which the condition of limited depth especially imposes upon the naturalist. How, in other words, when we take into account the limitation in depth of living corals, can we explain the erection of coral-reefs and islands, existing in abyssal or unfathomable depths of sea?

It is a striking characteristic of scientific procedure, that no new or strange fact is long left without an explanation. That the first explanation may not necessarily be correct, but is, on the contrary, more likely to prove untenable when a wider knowledge of the fact or facts is obtained, are statements which the history of scientific hypotheses and their verification fully endorses, and which the fate of the first-offered theories of the erection of coral-reefs fully confirms. To appreciate the points which the theories of the erection of coral-reefs include, it becomes necessary to glance, in the first instance, at the various forms which coral-reefs may assume. These reefs may be divided into fringing reefs, barrier reefs, and atolls or lagoon reefs. The nature of the first-named erections is explained by their name. They simply fringe or skirt the margins or coasts of lands, and appear to be mere coral-extensions of the ordinary beach. A typical reef of this description is seen to surround the island of Mauritius, and another skirts the coast of Cuba. A sounding-lead allowed to descend on the seaward face or edge of a fringing reef would strike the true sea-bottom at a depth not exceeding twenty-five fathoms. Its outer edge is formed of true reef-building corals, which seem to thrive best amid the spray and surf. Near the shore, different and less hardy corals live; and in the shallow water which intervenes between the reef and the shore, a whitish mud, consisting of the *débris* of the dead corals, is found, together with blocks of coral which have been torn from the reef and cast up on the shore by the violence of storms. 'A fringing reef,' says Mr. Darwin, 'if elevated in a perfect condition above the level of the sea, would present the singular appearance of a broad, dry moat, bounded by a low wall or mound.' The breadth of a fringing reef depends on the slope of the beach; the more gradual the slope, the further seawards will the reef extend; whilst a steep beach, preventing a great depth of water nearer the shore than the sloping form, will proportionally limit the seaward growth of the corals. On very steep coasts, fringing reefs may not exceed fifty yards in width, that measurement representing the distance from the shore at which the coral-polypes reach their farthest limit of depth. The barrier reef is an erection of a very different kind from the preceding variety of reef. In its most typical form, well seen on the north-east coast of Australia, or on the western coast of New Caledonia, a barrier reef appears as a great bank or reef of coral, separated from the adjoining land by a belt of water named the 'inner channel.' Sometimes an island—like Tahiti—is surrounded by a barrier reef which stands like a great wall around the land, but is separated from the latter by a channel. In the latter case the barrier reef receives the appro-

latter points suggested a theory whose simplicity is unfortunately its only recommendation. It was believed that, taking into account the limitation in depth of living corals, these animals obtained a basis and foundation in land which lay submerged some hundred and twenty or hundred and fifty feet in the sea; so that every coral-reef was regarded as simply presenting us with a coral top to solid land. The circular form of the atoll was ingeniously accounted for on the supposition that the coral-polypes had built around the rim of a volcanic crater, and that the break in the coral ring affording entrance to the lagoon was represented by a fissure of greater or less extent in the continuity of the crater's margin. The plausibility of this theory becomes sadly weakened if we subject its supporters to cross-examination from the physical geographer. For the stability of the ideas thus ventilated, it would require to be first proved that submarine plateaus or ridges existed not only in great profusion in the coral regions, but also that these plateaus existed at a uniform depth, so as to afford the necessary basis for the operations of the polypes. That physical geography affords not the slightest justification or foundation for such a belief, is a fact known to every schoolboy; and now that we are tolerably familiar with the nature of the bed of more than one great ocean through recent sounding and dredging expeditions, this theory might be simply relegated to the limbo of impossible beliefs on the ground of its entire inconsistency with plain fact. But its improbability might also be argued from the fact of its assuming the existence, in the coral areas of the ocean, of sunken land, which could not—except on the most arbitrary of suppositions—be supposed to be limited to these areas alone. And as ridges of land within 150 feet of the surface are unknown in other seas and areas, the theorist would have to explain the singularity of submarine plateaus existing so plentifully in one region and their entire absence in another. Geological science, if appealed to in this matter, would own that it knew of no support which could be given to the assumption of local elevations in the sea-bed; whilst it would suggest that the levelling tendency of the waters of the sea in smoothing down the ocean-bed would weigh greatly against the theorist's views. Thus, if the existence of submarine ridges be disproved, this first theory must necessarily fall to pieces and be wholly put out of court. The suggestion that atolls exist on a volcanic foundation meets with a similar fate when tested by the facts of geology and the logic of common sense. It may thus be remarked, that the mere shape and configuration of many of the atolls is entirely inconsistent with this explanation, no volcanic crater possessing, for instance, the form of Bow Atoll, 'which is five times as long as

it is broad.' And the mere question of size is at once seen to prove the utterly untenable nature of the suggestion of the origin of atolls: since it might be asked if reason could support a theory which on its own showing must postulate the existence of a volcanic crater 88 miles long by 20 miles broad at its greatest width, the latter being the measurements of one of the Maldive atolls. As in the previous case, this theory demands the recognition of the existence of numerous volcanic chains all existing within a limited depth of the surface; and, in view of the utter want of evidence, to show that any such immense volcanic area ever existed, this supposition must be unhesitatingly rejected. One further idea emanating from Chamisso may be lastly noted. This author held that, as the reef-building corals love the surf, the outermost parts of the reef will tend first to reach the surface and so assume a circular form. But this idea assumes that the foundations of the reef in such a case consist of a flat bank, and the existence of such foundations is, as we have already noted, inconsistent with fact. The origin of barrier reefs did not receive from the naturalists and geologists of the past the same amount of attention as the question of the nature and origin of atolls; a result due to the apparently more recondite character of the latter problem. The great Australian barrier reef was alleged to be founded 'on the edge of a submarine precipice parallel to the shore.' This idea may be dismissed with the remark, that no evidence is afforded that any such precipice or plateau exists.

It may be affirmed that until the year 1842 no theory of the origin of coral-reefs which stood the test of scientific cross-examination was promulgated. In that year Mr. Darwin gave to the world his views on this subject, and enunciated a theory which has firmly stood its ground against the most severe examination and criticism, and which at the present time remains as the only feasible theory of the origin of coral-reefs. If it be taken as a test of the truth of a hypothesis that it intelligently explains all the facts of a case and is found to be inconsistent with none, then Mr. Darwin's ideas may be regarded as constituting a theory of the most perfect kind. And it may be fearlessly affirmed that, had Mr. Darwin accomplished no further investigation than his researches on coral-reefs, he would have been entitled to the admiration and gratitude of all who regard the advancement of knowledge as of supreme consequence to man's welfare. Mr. Darwin spent some five or six years of his life (1831-36) as naturalist on board H.M.S. 'Beagle' under Captain FitzRoy, and was thus enabled to study the coral-polypes and their work in the most direct and advantageous manner; whilst Mr. Dana, representing the scientific leader of an American circumnavigating

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expedition (1838-42) under Captain (now Admiral) Wilkes, may be regarded as an authority of equal rank with Mr. Darwin on the subject of coral-reefs. It is worthy of remark that, whilst Mr. Darwin's observations were published in 1842, Mr. Dana's report on coral-reefs was then in manuscript, but the conclusions at which these observers arrived, independently of one another, were of essentially identical kind, and the fact speaks powerfully for the implied correctness of the views promulgated by these explorers. Mr. Darwin's theory, besides offering a consistent explanation of all the facts of coral-life, serves in the most direct manner to correlate and connect in the most natural fashion the various forms of coral-reefs. Starting with the assumption, already seen to rest on the most solid evidence, that coral-life is limited to one hundred and fifty feet as a maximum depth, Mr. Darwin rests his theory of the origin of reefs on the fact that land subsides. The recognition of the geological phenomena known as the subsidence or sinking of land forms the key-note of Mr. Darwin's views; and it may therefore be viewed as a pardonable digression, if the nature of these phenomena is in the present instance briefly explained. That land rises and sinks is a fact well known to the geologist, who can point to many areas of the earth's surface in proof of his statement. Everyone conversant with the elements of geology knows that the majority of the rocks composing the crust of the globe have been formed under water, and that a process of elevation must be assumed to account for their present position. Thus, true chalk is a rock composed of the remains of the minute Foraminiferous shells already noticed in this paper, and the cretaceous rocks were deposited in the sea-beds of the past, just as the shells of modern Foraminifera fall to the bottom of existing oceans to form a chalky layer which may be destined, when elevated, to form the chalk of the future. Elevation of the earth's surface thus exists as a primary fact of geological science. But it may be conclusively shown that, whilst at the present day certain areas of our earth's surface are undergoing this process of upheaval, other areas as surely exhibit an opposite or subsiding tendency. The fact that land subsides must, however, be regarded in the light of the obvious relations which exist between the sea and the land. The subsidence of land is ascertained and calculated by its fluctuations as regards the sea-level. Hence it is necessary that the burden of the change should be laid upon the shoulders of the land, and that the sea should be shown to be a factor of constant and unvarying nature in this process. That the water of the ocean obeys the same laws as the fluid in a vessel, is a stable fact. Practically we may regard the sea-level as invariable; and although theories of the influence of a polar ice-cap as tending to disturb the oceanic

equilibrium are not wanting, such widely operating causes, even if proved to assist, would affect areas of so wide an extent that their influence would be of the most slight and meagre kind. On the contrary, where the changes between the level of land and sea are of a markedly local description and limited to a certain defined area, the alteration is clearly seen to have its seat in the land and not in the sea, the level of which, outside the defined area of change, can be shown to be absolutely unaltered. For example, on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall the remains of submerged forests are met with, the roots of the trees being still fixed in the soil. As these trees must have grown on land, it follows that the incident reveals the submergence of a land-surface. If we credit the sea with having risen, and suppose that the land has been stationary, we must be able to show not only that the whole southern coast of England has been similarly invaded by the sea, but that the opposite coasts of France, and all the coasts bordering the North Sea and Atlantic, have been inundated. It is needless to point out that no such evidence is forthcoming, and that we are dealing with a subsidence of land, and not with a rising of the sea. Ample evidence of the existence of large areas of land-subsidence is afforded by the geological survey of the southern coasts of Sweden, the lower streets of the seaport towns of Scania, formerly inhabited, being now under water. The coasts of Greenland are similarly being depressed, and very marked alterations in climate may be shown to result from the existence of these movements on the part of what can no longer be regarded as the 'stable land.'

Bearing in mind the fact that land may subside completely beneath the surface of the sea, we may return from this digression to the consideration of Mr. Darwin's theory of coral-reefs. Beginning with the fringing reef, well seen in the island of Mauritius, it is shown that such an erection forms the initial stage of coral-formation. Here we find a natural foundation for the work of the living coral-polypes; the animals having fixed upon a natural coast line, and having at a suitable depth for themselves constructed a belt or fringe of coral, the seaward depth of which, as we have seen, does not descend below the fifteen-fathom line. So long as the land skirted by the fringing reef remains stable and stationary, so long will the reef remain essentially in its primitive condition. According as the shore slopes abruptly or gently, so will the breadth of the reef be limited, or be extended out to sea. No increase in depth is possible, seeing that the polypes have already attained, or have built upwards from, their lowest depth; and if the land remains in the condition in which it was when the fringing reef was first formed, the latter erection will also remain in *statu quo*. But, in accordance with the evidence of the geologist, land

may sink. And if we suppose that the land on which a fringing reef has grown slowly subsides, changes of great extent may be shown to occur within the attached zone of coral life. The lowermost corals, being carried out of their depth, must of necessity die; a new sphere of operation being at the same time afforded by the subsiding operation for the uppermost corals. These latter will therefore continue to produce new polypes, and an upward growth of the coral will accordingly accompany the downward movement of the land. If the land-subsidence continues, the increase of the sea-wall or outer aspect of the reef will be greater than that of its shore side or inward portion, seeing that on the former surface the conditions of life are more suitable for the growth of the massive reef-building corals. The inner part or shore aspect of what was once the fringing reef thus becomes deeper and deeper as subsidence proceeds, and in due time we find a great coral-ridge growing up in front of the sinking land, and separated therefrom by a belt of deep water. In this way the barrier reef is evolved by the subsidence of the fringing reef. But the land may be depressed to a still greater extent, and as before the upward coral-growth will keep pace with the subsidence. If we suppose that we are dealing with the case of an island, or with land of limited extent, we may conceive that in time the last island peak or surface of original land will sink beneath the waves. The coral-growth has, however, been proceeding uninterruptedly as before, and the lost land becomes ultimately surrounded by a great wall or cup of coral, enclosing a quiet lake, the atoll or lagoon of the Pacific voyager. The final processes which the atoll undergoes consist in the filling up of the lagoon by *débris* derived from the reef, and in the formation of a soil on the coral ring by the action of the sea, which detaches fragments of coral-rock, and heaps up sand on the surface of the new land. The sea will drift its weeds on the coral-rock, and these will decay and form a fertile soil in which seeds carried by the winds will take root and grow; and ultimately some race of nomads may be found to colonise this strange sea-born land. Thus we observe that a fringing reef affords evidence of either the rising or stationary character of its land: the barrier reef clearly intimates the subsidence of its foundations: and the atoll exists as an enduring monument erected over the burial-place of old and forgotten territory.

Such being Mr. Darwin's views, the feasibility of his theory may be proved by an appeal to the facts and deductions of geological science in particular. First, is it capable of proof that the regions in which atolls and barrier reefs mostly abound, constitute areas of land-subsidence? One vast area of this kind, extending in the Pacific Ocean for 7,000 miles from Pitcairn's Island and

the Low Archipelago to the Caroline and Pellew Islands, is a region wherein the work of coral-erection proceeds apace; and between India and Madagascar another area of depression measuring 1,500 miles in length has been clearly mapped out. A counter-proof of the correctness of Mr. Darwin's views is afforded by the deductions of geology in ascertaining that movements of elevation and depression in the earth's crust do not proceed contemporaneously in the same area; the causes producing the one movement being opposed to those which give origin to the other. Thus volcanic force invariably tends to produce elevation of the earth's crust, and the geologist would therefore esteem it a proof of the correct nature of Mr. Darwin's theory, could it be shown that active volcanoes were absent from the areas in which atoll and barrier reefs exist. Mr. Darwin's reply to this criticism is illustrated by an elaborately prepared map of the distribution of volcanoes, and may be given in his own words: it may 'be considered,' he says, 'as almost established, that volcanoes are often present in the areas which have lately risen or are still rising, and are invariably absent in those which have lately subsided or are still subsiding: ' whilst he has conclusively shown that the areas of active coral-formation exist as regions destitute of active volcanoes, and in some instances as areas possessing no volcanoes at all. 'The regions occupied by fringing reefs may be said to be those in which volcanic matter every now and then bursts forth,' and tends to elevation. The areas of barrier reefs and atolls are 'wide spaces sinking without any volcanic outbursts; and we may,' concludes Mr. Darwin, 'feel sure that the movement has been so slow as to have allowed the corals to grow up to the surface, and so widely extended as to have buried over the broad face of the ocean everyone of these mountains, above which the atolls now stand like monuments marking the place of their burial.'

These ideas are strongly supported by the observations made on *raised* coral-reefs. That sinking must take place in the course of the formation of reefs is proved by the examination of some raised coral-rocks, 'as at the island of Mangaia in the Hervey Group,' where the elevated reef rises 300 feet above the sea-level. These rocks must have been formed in water; and as we know the limit of coral life to have been 150 feet, it follows that such elevated reefs could not have been made 'without a sinking of many scores of feet during their progress.' Another explorer tells us that he can vouch for the existence of raised coral-reefs at Timor and Java, these coral-rocks existing at heights varying from 100 to 200 feet above the level of the sea.

The subject of coral and coral-reefs, like most other studies in

natural science, becomes related in an intimate manner to other branches of knowledge, and to other trains of thought. In the case before us, it may prove interesting if, by way of conclusion, we endeavour to point out one of the many subsidiary subjects on which a study like the present is adapted to throw some degree of light. The most sublime idea of nature which man can well obtain is that of the uniformity and constant character of natural operations and laws. To the student of nature, the idea of capriciousness exists only as the result of an erroneous interpretation of some violated course of law and order; and in the modern study of earth-science, the geologist is led to recognise in the principle of the uniformity of nature the means whereby all physical actions are bound together in one harmonious whole. It so happens that the evidence capable of being adduced from the growth of coral-reefs goes far to prove the constant and uniform state of our earth throughout immense periods of time. The testimony of Mr. Dana with regard to the rate at which coral grows is to the effect that the massive corals on which the increase of reef depends are of very slow growth; the branching and certain other kinds growing at a faster rate. One-eighth of an inch per year is given by this author as 'the average upward increase of the whole reef-ground per year;' and the estimate appears to be a perfectly just one, when judged by the evidence afforded us of the rate of growth in corals. All authorities agree in stating the growth of massive corals at a very low rate, and the time which has been occupied in the formation of a reef 2,000 feet thick must therefore, on Mr. Dana's estimate, be set down at one hundred and ninety-five thousand years. This computation, it must be remembered, is one dealing with the work of modern corals. In the far-back past coral-reefs existed, similar in every respect to their modern representatives; these fossil-reefs in many cases evincing an immense thickness. Hence we are led to believe that, notwithstanding the alteration which our earth has undergone, it has had prolonged periods of rest; and the existence of a modern coral-reef may therefore afford evidence, not only of the immensity of past time, but also of the uniformity of nature's ways and works during periods compared with which the furthest limits of history and even of man's own age, are but as yesterday. The deductions from a study like the present may be fitly expressed in Laugel's words, as giving us 'a higher conception of the universe than that entertained by the ancients;' since science 'no longer regards the material world as the plaything of mere caprice,' but 'embraces the past, the present, and the future in a magnificent unity, outside of which nothing can exist.'

Some Random Notes of an Idle Excursion.

BY MARK TWAIN.

III.

So the Reverend and I had at last arrived at Hamilton, the principal town in the Bermuda Islands. A wonderfully white town; white as snow itself. White as marble; white as flour. Yet looking like none of these, exactly. Never mind, we said; we shall hit upon a figure by and by that will describe this peculiar white.

It was a town that was compacted together upon the sides and tops of a cluster of small hills. Its outlying borders fringed off and thinned away among the cedar forests, and there was no woody distance of curving coast, or leafy islet sleeping upon the dimpled, painted sea, but was flecked with shining white points—half-concealed houses peeping out of the foliage.

The architecture of the town was mainly Spanish, inherited from the colonists of two hundred and fifty years ago. Some ragged-topped cocoa-palms, glimpsed here and there, gave the land a tropical aspect.

There was an ample pier of heavy masonry; upon this, under shelter, were some thousands of barrels containing that product which has carried the fame of Bermuda to many lands—the potato. With here and there an onion. That last sentence is facetious; for they grow at least two onions in Bermuda to one potato. The onion is the pride and joy of Bermuda. It is her jewel, her gem of gems. In her conversation, her pulpit, her literature, it is her most frequent and eloquent figure. In Bermudian metaphor it stands for perfection—perfection absolute.

The Bermudian weeping over the departed, exhausts praise when he says, 'He was an onion!' The Bermudian extolling the living hero, bankrupts applause when he says, 'He is an onion!' The Bermudian setting his son upon the stage of life to dare and do for himself, climaxes all counsel, supplication, admonition, comprehends all ambition, when he says, 'Be an onion!'

When parallel with the pier, and ten or fifteen steps outside it, we anchored. It was Sunday, bright and sunny. The groups upon the pier, men, youths, and boys, were whites and blacks in about equal proportion. All were well and neatly dressed, many of them nattily, a few of them very stylishly. One would have to

travel far before he would find another town of twelve thousand inhabitants that could represent itself so respectably, in the matter of clothes, on a freight-pier, without premeditation or effort. The women and young girls, black and white, who occasionally passed by, were nicely clad, and many were elegantly and fashionably so. The men did not affect summer clothing much, but the girls and women did, and their white garments were good to look at, after so many months of familiarity with sombre colours.

Around one isolated potato barrel stood four young gentlemen, two black, two white, becomingly dressed, each with the head of a slender cane pressed against his teeth, and each with a foot propped up on the barrel. Another young gentleman came up, looked longingly at the barrel, but saw no rest for his foot there, and turned pensively away to seek another barrel. He wandered here and there, but without result. Nobody sat upon a barrel, as is the custom of the idle in other lands, yet all the isolated barrels were humanly occupied. Whosoever had a foot to spare put it on a barrel, if all the places on it were not already taken. The habits of all peoples are determined by their circumstances. The Bermudians lean upon barrels because of the scarcity of lamp-posts.

Many citizens came on board and spoke eagerly to the officers—inquiring about the Turco-Russian war news, I supposed. However, by listening judiciously, I found that this was not so. They said, ‘What is the price of onions?’ or, ‘How’s onions?’ Naturally enough this was their first interest; but they dropped into the war the moment it was satisfied.

We went ashore and found a novelty of a pleasing nature: there were no hackmen, hacks, or omnibuses on the pier or about it anywhere, and nobody offered his services to us, or molested us in any way. I said it was like being in heaven. The Reverend rebukingly and rather pointedly advised me to make the most of it, then. We knew of a boarding-house, and what we needed now was somebody to pilot us to it. Presently a little barefooted coloured boy came along, whose raggedness was conspicuously un-Bermudian. His rear was so marvellously bepatched with coloured squares and triangles that one was half persuaded he had got it out of an atlas. When the sun struck him right, he was as good to follow as a lightning-bug. We hired him and dropped into his wake. He piloted us through one picturesque street after another, and in due course deposited us where we belonged. He charged nothing for his map, and but a trifle for his services; so the Reverend doubled it. The little chap received the money with a beaming applause in his eye which plainly said, ‘This man’s an onion!’

We had brought no letters of introduction ; our names had been misspelt in the passenger list ; nobody knew whether we were honest folk or otherwise. So we were expecting to have a good private time in case there was nothing in our general aspect to close boarding-house doors against us. We had no trouble. Bermuda has had but little experience of rascals, and is not suspicious. We got large, cool, well-lighted rooms on a second floor, overlooking a bloomy display of flowers and flowering shrubs—calla and annunciation lilies, lantanas, heliotrope, jessamine, roses, pinks, double geraniums, oleanders, pomegranates, blue morning-glories of a great size, and many plants that were unknown to me.

We took a long afternoon walk, and soon found out that that exceedingly white town was built of blocks of white coral. Bermuda is a coral island, with a six-inch crust of soil on top of it, and every man has a quarry on his own premises. Everywhere you go you see square recesses cut into the hill-sides, with perpendicular walls unmarred by crack or crevice, and perhaps you fancy that a house grew out of the ground there, and has been removed in a single piece from the mould. If you do, you err. But the material for a house has been quarried there. They cut right down through the coral, to any depth that is convenient—ten to twenty feet—and take it out in great square blocks. This cutting is done with a chisel that has a handle twelve or fifteen feet long, and is used as one uses a crowbar when he is drilling a hole, or a dasher when he is churning. Thus soft is this stone. Then with a common handsaw they saw the great blocks into handsome, huge bricks that are two feet long, a foot wide, and about six inches thick. These stand loosely piled during a month to harden ; then the work of building begins. The house is built of these blocks ; it is roofed with broad coral slabs an inch thick, whose edges lap upon each other, so that the roof looks like a succession of shallow steps or terraces ; the chimneys are built of the coral blocks and sawed into graceful and picturesque patterns ; the ground-floor verandah is paved with coral blocks ; also the walk to the gate ; the fence is built of coral blocks—built in massive panels, with broad cap-stones and heavy gate-posts, and the whole trimmed into easy lines and comely shape with the saw. Then they put a hard coat of whitewash, as thick as your thumb-nail, on the fence and all over the house, roof, chimneys, and all ; the sun comes out and shines on this spectacle, and it is time for you to shut your unaccustomed eyes, lest they be put out. It is the whitest white you can conceive of, and the blindingest. A Bermuda house does not look like marble ; it is a much intenser white than that ; and besides, there is a dainty, indefinable something else about its look.

that is not marble-like. We put in a great deal of solid talk and reflection over this matter of trying to find a figure that would describe the unique white of a Bermuda house, and we contrived to hit upon it at last. It is exactly the white of the icing of a cake, and has the same unemphasized and scarcely perceptible polish. The white of marble is modest and retiring compared with it.

After the house is cased in its hard scale of whitewash, not a crack, or sign of a seam, or joining of the blocks, is detectable, from base-stone to chimney-top; the building looks as if it had been carved from a single block of stone, and the doors and windows sawed out afterwards. A white marble house has a cold, tomb-like, unsociable look, and takes the conversation out of a body and depresses him. Not so with a Bermuda house. There is something exhilarating, even hilarious, about its vivid whiteness when the sun plays upon it. If it be of picturesque shape and graceful contour—and many of the Bermudian dwellings are—it will so fascinate you that you will keep your eyes upon it until they ache. One of those clean-cut, fanciful chimneys—too pure and white for this world—with one side glowing in the sun and the other touched with a soft shadow, is an object that will charm one's gaze by the hour. I know of no other country that has chimneys worthy to be gazed at and gloated over. One of those snowy houses, half-concealed and half-glimpsed through green foliage, is a pretty thing to see; and if it takes one by surprise and suddenly, as he turns a sharp corner of a country road, it will wring an exclamation from him, sure.

Wherever you go, in town or country, you find those snowy houses, and always with masses of bright-coloured flowers about them, but with no vines climbing their walls; vines cannot take hold of the smooth, hard whitewash. Wherever you go, in the town or along the country roads, among little potato farms and patches or expensive country-seats, these stainless white dwellings, gleaming out from flowers and foliage, meet you at every turn. The least little bit of a cottage is as white and blemishless as the stateliest mansion. Nowhere is there dirt or stench, puddle, or hog-wallow, neglect, disorder, or lack of trimness and neatness. The roads, the streets, the dwellings, the people, the clothes, this neatness extends to everything that falls under the eye. It is the tidiest country in the world. And very much the tidiest, too.

Considering these things, the question came up, Where do the poor live? No answer was arrived at. Therefore, we agreed to leave this conundrum for future statesmen to wrangle over.

What a bright and startling spectacle one of those blazing white country palaces, with its brown-tinted window caps and

ledges, and green shutters, and its wealth of caressing flowers and foliage, would be in black London! And what a gleaming surprise it would be in nearly any American city one could mention too!

Bermuda roads are made by cutting down a few inches into the solid white coral—or a good many feet, where a hill intrudes itself—and smoothing off the surface of the road-bed. It is a simple and easy process. The grain of the coral is coarse and porous; the road-bed has the look of being made of coarse white sugar. Its excessive cleanness and whiteness are a trouble in one way: the sun is reflected into your eyes with such energy as you walk along that you want to sneeze all the time. Old Captain Tom Bowling found another difficulty. He joined us in our walk, but kept wandering unrestfully to the road-side. Finally he explained. Said he, ‘Well, I chew, you know, and the road’s so plaguy clean.’

We walked several miles that afternoon in the bewildering glare of the sun, the white roads, and the white buildings. Our eyes got to paining us a good deal. By and by a soothing, blessed twilight spread its cool balm around. We looked up in pleased surprise, and saw that it proceeded from an intensely black negro who was going by. We answered his military salute in the grateful gloom of his near presence, and then passed on into the pitiless white glare again.

The coloured women whom we met usually bowed and spoke; so did the children. The coloured men commonly gave the military salute. They borrowed this fashion from the soldiers, no doubt; England has kept a garrison here for generations. The younger men’s custom of carrying small canes is also borrowed from the soldiers, I suppose, who always carry a cane, in Bermuda as everywhere else in Britain’s broad dominions.

The country roads curve and wind hither and thither in the delightfulest way, unfolding pretty surprises at every turn: billowy masses of oleander that seem to float out from behind distant projections like the pink cloud-banks of sunset; sudden plunges among cottages and gardens, life and activity, followed by as sudden plunges into the sombre twilight and stillness of the woods; flitting visions of white fortresses and beacon towers pictured against the sky on remote hill-tops; glimpses of shining green sea caught for a moment through opening headlands, then lost again; more woods and solitude; and by and by another turn lays bare, without warning, the full sweep of the inland ocean, enriched with its bars of soft colour, and graced with its wandering sails.

Take any road you please, you may depend upon it you will

not stay in it half a mile. Your road is everything that a road ought to be: it is bordered with trees, and with strange plants and flowers: it is shady and pleasant, or sunny and still pleasant; it carries you by the prettiest and peace fullest and most home-like of homes, and through stretches of forest that lie in a deep hush sometimes, and sometimes are alive with the music of birds; it curves always, which is a continual promise, whereas straight roads reveal everything at a glance and kill interest. Your road is all this, and yet you will not stay in it half a mile, for the reason that little, seductive, mysterious roads are always branching out from it on either hand, and as these curve sharply also and hide what is beyond, you cannot resist the temptation to desert your own chosen road and explore them. You are usually paid for your trouble; consequently, your walk inland always turns out to be one of the most crooked, involved, purposeless, and interesting experiences a body can imagine. There is enough of variety. Sometimes you are in the level open, with marshes thick grown with flag-lances that are ten feet high on the one hand, and potato and onion orchards on the other; next, you are on a hill-top, with the ocean and the Islands spread around you; presently, the road winds through a deep cut shut in by perpendicular walls, thirty or forty feet high, marked with the oddest and abruptest stratum lines, suggestive of sudden and eccentric old upheavals, and garnished with here and there a clinging adventurous flower, and here and there a dangling vine; and by and by your way is along the sea edge, and you may look down a fathom or two through the transparent water and watch the diamond-like flash and play of the light upon the rocks and sands on the bottom until you are tired of it—if you are so constituted as to be able to get tired of it.

You may march the country roads in maiden meditation fancy free, by field and farm, for no dog will plunge out at you from unsuspected gate, with breath-taking surprise of ferocious bark, notwithstanding it is a Christian land and a civilised. We saw upwards of a million cats in Bermuda, but the people are very abstemious in the matter of dogs. Two or three nights we prowled the country far and wide, and never once were accosted by a dog. It is a great privilege to visit such a land. The cats were no offence when properly distributed, but when piled they obstructed travel.

As we entered the edge of the town that Sunday afternoon, we stopped at a cottage to get a drink of water. The proprietor, a middle-aged man with a good face, asked us to sit down and rest. His dame brought chairs, and we grouped ourselves in the shade of the trees by the door. Mr. Smith—that was not his name, but

it will answer—questioned us about ourselves and our country, and we answered him truthfully, as a general thing, and questioned him in return. It was all very simple and pleasant and sociable. Rural, too; for there was a pig and a small donkey and a hen anchored out, close at hand, by cords to their legs, on a spot that purported to be grassy. Presently, a woman passed along, and although she coldly said nothing, she changed the drift of our talk. Said Smith:

‘She didn’t look this way, you noticed? Well, she is our next neighbour on one side, and there’s another family that’s our next neighbours on the other side; but there’s a general coolness all around now, and we don’t speak. Yet these three families, one generation and another, have lived here side by side and been as friendly as weavers for a hundred and fifty years, till about a year ago.’

‘Why, what calamity could have been powerful enough to break up so old a friendship?’

‘Well, it was too bad, but it couldn’t be helped. It happened like this: About a year or more ago, the rats got to pestering my place a good deal, and I set up a steel-trap in the back yard. Both of these neighbours run considerable to cats, and so I warned them about the trap, because their cats were pretty sociable around here nights, and they might get into trouble without my intending it. Well, they shut up their cats for a while, but you know how it is with people; they got careless, and sure enough one night the trap took Mrs. Jones’s principal tom-cat into camp, and finished him up. In the morning Mrs. Jones comes here with the corpse in her arms, and cries and takes on the same as if it was a child. It was a cat by the name of Yelverton—Hector G. Yelverton—a troublesome old rip, with no more principle than an Injun, though you couldn’t make *her* believe it. I said all a man could to comfort her, but no, nothing would do but I must pay for him. Finally, I said I warn’t investing in cats now as much as I was, and with that she walked off in a huff, carrying the remains with her. That closed our intercourse with the Joneses. Mr. Jones joined another church and took her tribe with her. She said she would not hold fellowship with assassins. Well, by and by comes Mrs. Brown’s turn—she that went by here a minute ago. She had a disgraceful old yellow cat that she thought as much of as if he was twins, and one night he tried that trap on his neck, and it fitted him so, and was so sort of satisfactory, that he laid down and curled up and stayed with it. Such was the end of Sir John Baldwin.’

‘Was that the name of the cat?’

‘The same. There’s cats around here with names that would surprise you. Maria’—to his wife—‘what was that cat’s name that eat a keg of ratsbane by mistake over at Hooper’s, and started home and got struck by lightning and took the blind staggers and fell in the well and was most drowned before they could fish him out?’

‘That was that coloured Deacon Jackson’s cat. I only remember the last end of its name, which was To-be-or-not-to-be-that-is-the-question-Jackson.’

‘Sho, that ain’t the one. That’s the one that eat up an entire box of Seidlitz powders, and then hadn’t any more judgment than to go and take a drink. He was considered to be a great loss, but I never could see it. Well, no matter about the names. Mrs. Brown wanted to be reasonable, but Mrs. Jones wouldn’t let her. She put her up to going to law for damages. So to law she went, and had the face to claim seven shillings and sixpence. It made a great stir. All the neighbours went to court; everybody took sides. It got hotter and hotter, and broke up all the friendships for three hundred yards around—friendships that had lasted for generations and generations.

‘Well, I proved by eleven witnesses that the cat was of a low character and very ornery, and warn’t worth a cancelled postage-stamp, any way, taking the average of cats here; but I lost the case. What could I expect? The system is all wrong here, and is bound to make revolution and bloodshed some day. You see, they give the magistrate a poor little starvation salary, and then turn him loose on the public to gouge for fees and costs to live on. What is the natural result? Why, he never looks into the justice of a case—never once. All he looks at is which client has got the money. So this one piled the fees and costs and everything on to me. I could pay specie, don’t you see? and he knew mighty well that if he put the verdict on to Mrs. Brown, where it belonged, he’d have to take his swag in currency.’

‘Currency? Why, has Bermuda a currency?’

‘Yes—onions. And they were forty per cent. discount, too, then, because the season had been over as much as three months. So I lost my case. I had to pay for that cat. But the general trouble the case made was the worst thing about it. Broke up so much good feeling. The neighbours don’t speak to each other now. Mrs. Brown had named a child after me. So she changed its name right away. She is a Baptist. Well, in the course of baptizing it over again, it got drowned. I was hoping we might get to be friendly again some time or other, but of course this drowning the child knocked that all out of the question. It would

have saved a world of heart-break and ill blood if she had named it dry.'

I knew by the sigh that this was honest. All this trouble and all this destruction of confidence in the purity of the bench on account of a seven-shilling lawsuit about a cat! Somehow, it seemed to 'size' the country.

At this point we observed that an English flag had just been placed at half-mast on a building a hundred yards away. I and my friend were busy in an instant trying to imagine whose death, among the island dignitaries, could command such a mark of respect as this. Then a shudder shook him and me at the same moment, and I knew that we had jumped to one and the same conclusion: 'The governor has gone to England; it is for the British admiral!'

At this moment Mr. Smith noticed the flag. He said with emotion:—

'That's on a boarding-house. I judge there's a boarder dead.'

A dozen other flags within view went to half-mast.

'It's a boarder, sure,' said Smith.

'But would they half-mast the flags here for a boarder, Mr. Smith?'

'Why, certainly they would, if he was *dead*.'

That seemed to 'size' the country again.

Patience.

How you glance and glint and glow
 Through the snow !
 How you shoot and skim and sail
 At the gale !
 Flashing hither, gliding thither,
 O'er the level, through the hollow ;
 Hardly heeding whence or whither,
 Swiftly, shrilly as a swallow ;
 Flitting fast on fairy feet,
 Like a sunbeam over ocean ;
 You're a strophe suave and sweet
 Of the poetry of motion ;
 And, you rosy Spirit of Frost,
 You forget
 That I see you—to my cost,
 My Coquette !

What she will, let Lucy say
 From the sleigh ;
 They're contented, He and She—
 Look at me !
 Look at me afar, enraptured
 With the fancy of your pleasure !
 Hear my heart, the heart you've captured,
 Moving with you to the measure
 Of those dear and dainty feet
 That, along the ice a-ringing,
 Echoes all so clear and sweet
 Through my happy thought are ringing,
 That about me sinks and swells
 (In the wet !)
 A romance of marriage bells,
 My Coquette !

White and wildering are the flakes
 Winter shakes
 From his handkerchief above !
 O my love,
 In your service he's so zealous,
 He's so careful of your blisses,
 I should swear, if I were jealous,
 That he meant them all for kisses.
 Ah, your perfect little feet !
 All too cruel in their neatness,
 On they twinkle with you, sweet,
 In an ecstasy of fleetness ;
 Leaving with me a desire,
 A regret,
 And a memory—all of fire,
 My Coquette !



PATINEUSE.

SSW
1871

Theodore Hook.

BY H. BARTON BAKER.

THAT we are of a sadder race than were our grandfathers is past a doubt; that we are, in consequence, of a wiser, is very disputable. Fun, mirth, real animal spirits are dead amongst us; over-fastidiousness, false refinement, have so toned us down that no brightness remains in us, and we are a mere agglomeration of negatives. Our jests have no laughter in them, they have only the grin of a death's head mocking its own corruption; and the grin can only be evolved at the expense of something that preceding generations have ennobled. Our very schoolboys are dyspeptic cynics who would scorn such efflorescences as once characterised men of twenty and thirty. Practical jokes are now held in horror,—and, regarded from a certain point of view, they are indefensible; but they were frequently the first outcomes of that vigorous life which thereafter made daring soldiers, sailors, and heroes of all kinds, reformers, explorers, the men who make a nation's history. The old-young man of the present day with his cynicism, his intense realism which strips the very flesh off humanity and gloats upon its skeleton, who believes in nothing save himself, and that the whole duty of man is summed up in Iago's creed, 'Put money in thy purse,' who scorns sentiment and love as the hallucinations of a silly bygone age, who finds in the noblest records of what men and women have done and suffered only capital subjects for burlesque, who sneers at everything on earth save gold; these young men have not the vices of their great-grandfathers, but neither have they their virtues; they do not *publicly* sin against the proprieties, neither do they ever sin against their own interests.

To appreciate the vast gulf in manners that divides us from, say, the opening years of the nineteenth century, we have only to turn to the lives of the wits and humourists of that period, to the account of their sayings and doings, their mode of life. Endeavour to conceive a Charles Mathews the Elder, a Theodore Hook, a Thomas Hill, a Barham, in the present day. It is an impossibility; they would be as much out of place as a knight's errant or a mediæval monk. Fancy a man perpetrating the Berners Street or the Spanish Ambassador hoax in this year of grace 1877. You can no more imagine it than you can a mail-clad knight nailing his mistress's colours against the Charing Cross Hotel and challeng-

ing every man who drove up in a hansom to do battle in defence of her peerless beauty. The sequel to both such adventures would be a policeman and Bow Street.

It is with the most notorious of all practical jokers that this paper has to do. Theodore Hook was born in the same year as Lord Byron, 1788, and was likewise his school-fellow at Harrow, where, however, he did not remain long enough to form any intimacy with the future great poet. Hook's father was a musical composer of some celebrity in his day; his only brother, born eighteen years before him, became Dean of Worcester; he was a man of wit and ability and the author of a couple of novels, frequently ascribed to his younger brother, 'Pen Owen' and 'Percy Mallory.' In his novel of 'Gilbert Gurney,' which contains so much of his personal history, Theodore gives a glimpse of his youth which admirably foreshadows the man. 'My school life was not a happy one. I was idle and careless of my tasks. I had no aptitude for learning languages. I hated Greek and absolutely shuddered at Hebrew. I fancied myself a genius, and everything that could be done in a hurry and with little trouble I did tolerably well, but application I had not.' The death of his mother—an estimable woman, who might, had she lived, have toned down the extravagances of his disposition—when he was only fourteen years old, had a momentous effect upon his future life. His father, an easy-going jovial man, readily listened to his pleadings not to be sent back to school, and kept him at home as a companion to solace him in his affliction, though, young as he was, he had already given evidence of those talents which thereafter rendered him so famous. He had a fine ear for music, a beautiful voice, and was a brilliant pianist. One evening he played and sang two songs, one pathetic and the other comic, which were new to his father, and which, upon inquiry, he declared to be his own composition, both music and words. Mr. Hook composed ballad music, but had to seek elsewhere for the verses; nothing could be more opportune than this discovery of his son's abilities. Henceforth there was a partnership. 'So I remained at home,' to again quote Gurney, 'and was my father's darling; he fancied nothing on earth was like me. I was the wittiest if not the wisest fellow breathing, and I have seen my respectable parent shake his fat sides with laughing at my jokes and antics, till the tears ran down his cheeks.'

We can imagine the clever, precocious, handsome boy, with his brilliant eyes, the lion of his father's table, surrounded by such gay and pleasant company—actors, singers, wits, and authors—as gathered beneath the musician's roof, singing, playing, punning, jesting, complimenting, improvising, regarded by everybody as a phe-

nomenon; writing songs for the theatres, petted by pretty actresses, and lounging in green-rooms. Such a life would have turned older heads than that of this mere boy.

Rumours came to the ears of his elder brother, who was already rising in the Church, and who urged his father to place the youth in some more solid career. The Bar was decided upon, and in 1804 Theodore was sent to Oxford. His appearance was more juvenile than his years. ‘You seem very young,’ sir, remarked the Vice-Chancellor; ‘are you prepared to sign the Thirty-nine Articles?’ ‘Oh, yes, sir, *forty* if you please,’ was the cool reply. This levity so horrified the don that it was only by the strong intercession of his brother and his own humble apologies that Theodore was admitted to matriculation. It being arranged that he should not reside until after the expiration of two terms, he returned to London, there to pursue a certain course of study. ‘There is something extremely vague,’ says Gurney, ‘in the term studying for the bar ; in seven cases out of ten it means doing nothing, under a gentlemanly pretence; in mine nothing could be more unlike what it professed to be. I paid my entrance money, gave my caution, and thenceforth proceeded to “mine inn” for four or five days each term, threw on my gown, walked into hall, and, dreading the fatigue of even eating professionally, wrote down my name, and walked out again.’ His studies were of a very different kind from those prescribed by the University, being chiefly directed to French vaudevilles, and the outcome was a two-act comic opera, ‘The Soldier’s Return, or What can Beauty Do?’ The overture and incidental music were claimed by Mr. Hook, but Theodore’s name did not appear upon the bill. Unlike the production of his pseudonym, Gurney, the piece was an immense success, and brought him into intimacy with two men almost as brilliant as himself, Mathews and Liston, with whom he remained firm friends through life. A second farce, ‘Catch Him Who Can,’ was written to display the opposite styles of humour of those inimitable comedians. ‘The Invisible Girl,’ ‘Music Mad,’ ‘Killing no Murder,’ and other farces now forgotten, and the musical melodrama ‘Tekeli,’ were all produced before the author had completed his twentieth year. There is as much wit, humour, and rollicking fun in any one of them as would serve for half a dozen such productions of the present time ; nothing so good had been written since the days of Foote, and they were most exceptionally fortunate in being interpreted by such actors as Mathews, Liston, Terry, and other artists little inferior in their own particular line. — “ ————— ” ————— procured him an introduction to Sheridan. ————— is well described by Mrs. Mathews, in her

memoirs of her husband. A dinner was given to the great manager of Drury Lane, by the actors, to celebrate his victory at the Westminster election, and to this the young dramatist was invited. In the course of the evening many persons sang; and Mr. Hook, being in turn solicited, displayed, to the delight and surprise of all present, his wondrous talents in extemporaneous singing. The company was numerous, and most of them were strangers to Mr. Hook, but without a moment's premeditation he composed a verse upon every person in the room, full of the most pointed wit, and with the truest rhymes, unhesitatingly gathering into his subject as he rapidly proceeded, in addition to what had passed during the dinner, every trivial incident of the moment. Every action was turned to account, every circumstance, the look, the gesture, or any other accidental effects, served as occasion for more wit; and even the singer's ignorance of the names and condition of many of the party seemed to give greater facility to his brilliant hits than even acquaintance with them might have furnished. Mr. Sheridan was astonished at his extraordinary faculty, and declared that he could not have imagined such power possible, had he not witnessed it. No description, he said, could have convinced him of so peculiar an instance of genius, and he protested that he should not have believed it to be an unstudied effort, had he not seen proof that no anticipation could have been formed of what might arise to furnish matter and opportunities for the exercise of this rare talent.

Sheridan talked everywhere among his fashionable friends of this extraordinary phenomenon, with his marvellous talents for improvising, and so roused their curiosity, that invitations were sent to Theodore for several aristocratic parties; among others, for one at the house of the Marchioness of Hertford. There he had the privilege of exercising his abilities for the delight of no less a person than the Prince Regent. 'Mr. Hook, I must see and hear you again,' said the Prince, laying his hand upon his shoulder. And he did see and hear him again and again, at suppers and dinners too, and declared that 'something must be done for Hook.' From that time, the wit was a welcome guest in the most fashionable circles.

At twenty he gave up writing for the stage, and ever after, for some inexplicable reason, entertained a most virulent dislike for everything and everybody connected with it—except his few chosen friends—of which he years afterwards gave bitter proof in the theatrical criticisms in 'John Bull.' In after life, he used to repeatedly express his wonder that there could ever have been a time when that world was all in all to him, and kept himself away

from it as if there was contamination in the very lamps. From dramatic he turned to novel writing, and at twenty published his first novel, 'Musgrave,' under the pseudonym of Alfred Allendale. It was an utter failure. He afterwards re-wrote it, and inserted it in 'Sayings and Doings,' under the title of 'Merton.' It appears to have been a work of little merit, in no way foreshadowing the brilliance of its successors.

In the mean while, he was privately acting in his own person the lives of the scapegrace heroes of his own farces. It was an age of practical jokes—all the memoirs of the period abound with them—but Hook may be regarded, if not as the inventor, at least as the perfecter of the hoax. His jokes respected neither time, place, nor person, and were played off equally upon his most intimate friends and the most perfect strangers. Wrenching off knockers, bell-pulls, and sign-boards, of which *débris* he made a museum, was a fashionable amusement he shared in common with nearly all 'the young bloods' of the day. There is a story told of his carrying off a splendid wooden Highlander from before a snuff shop, throwing a cloak round it, and thrusting it into a cab. 'My friend,' he said, addressing the driver, who looked rather astonished at the figure, 'a very respectable man, but a little tipsy.' Not even the passers-by in the street were exempt from his cool impudence. Observing a man of most pompous air strutting down the Strand, he stopped him with 'I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask if you are any one particular?' Then, without waiting for a reply, he walked off, leaving the stranger transfixed with amazement.

These, however, are but poor specimens of his effrontery. Strolling one day arm-in-arm with Daniel Terry, the actor, up a street in Soho, his nostrils were assailed by a most savoury odour. Looking down an area, he saw the servants in the kitchen below dressing up a very fine dinner. 'A party no doubt,' said Terry; 'jolly dogs! what a feast! I should like to make one of them.' 'I'll take a bet I *do*,' replied Hook. 'Call for me here at ten.' Leaving his friend, he mounted the steps and knocked at the door. Believing him to be one of the expected guests, the servant conducted him to the drawing-room, where a number of persons were already assembled. Making himself perfectly at home, he had half-a-dozen people about him, laughing at his *bons mots*, before the host discovered that a stranger was present. 'I beg your pardon, sir,' he said, addressing the uninvited one, 'your name?—I did not quite catch it; servants are so incorrect.' 'Smith, sir, Smith,' replied the unblushing Theodore, 'don't apologise; you are quite right, sir, servants are great blockheads: I remember a most remarkable instance of their mistakes.' 'But really, sir,'

interrupted the host mildly, 'I did not anticipate the pleasure of Mr. Smith's company to dinner. Whom do you suppose you are addressing?' 'Mr. Thompson, of course,' answered Hook, 'an old friend of my father's. I received a kind invitation from you yesterday, on my arrival from Liverpool, to dine with you to-day, family party, come in boots, you said.' The host at once disclaimed the name of Thompson, or any knowledge of the vivacious Smith. 'Good heavens! then I have come to the wrong house,' exclaimed the hoaxer, 'my dear sir, how can I apologise? so awkward too, and I have asked a friend to call for me.' The old gentleman, probably thinking so witty a personage would make an excellent addition to his party, begged him to remain. With a profusion of apologies, Hook at first pretended to decline—ultimately accepted. Everybody was delighted with him, all the evening he kept up a constant fire of wit and repartee, and ultimately sat down to the piano, and sang extempore verses on every one present. In the midst of these the door opened and, true to his appointment, in walked Terry, at the sight of whom, striking a new key, he sang:

I'm very much pleased with your fare,
Your cellar's as fine as your cook;
My friend's Mr. Terry, the player,
And I'm Mr. Theodore Hook.

And 'that name,' says Lockhart, 'was already enough to put any wig in Guildhall out of curl.'

One day, after riding some distance in a hackney-coach, he discovered he had no money in his pocket to pay the fare. Catching sight of a friend upon the road, he took him up, hoping to borrow from him the sum required, but the friend was as impecunious as himself. Hook considered for a moment, then, calling out to the coachman, desired him to drive to Mr. —'s, a well-known West-end surgeon. Arrived there he sprang out of the coach, knocked loudly, and demanded of the servant who answered if Mr. So-and-So was within. The doctor was descending the stairs at the time. 'Oh, my dear sir,' he cried in a wildly agitated voice, 'I trust you are not engaged—excuse the feelings of a husband, perhaps a father by this time—your attendance is required instantly at Mrs. —, No. — such-and-such a street. Don't lose a moment: a most peculiar case, I assure you.'

'I will order my carriage and go at once,' said the Doctor.

'No need for such delay, I have one at the door; jump in; I have to go for the nurse, and will follow immediately.'

The lady to whose house the doctor was driven was a sour-tempered middle-aged spinster; her indignation upon receiving

such a visit for such a purpose may be imagined, and the doctor was too glad to escape from her very pronounced wrath. But his troubles were not yet over, for upon arriving home cabby demanded of him the entire fare, and would not leave the house until it was paid.

But all such tricks sink into insignificance beside the immortal Berners Street hoax. The story is so well known that I must almost apologise for introducing it, yet no sketch of its hero would be complete without it. Walking down Berners Street one day with Mathews, he remarked a particularly neat-looking house. 'I'll bet you a guinea,' he said, 'that in one week that nice quiet dwelling shall be the most famous in all London.' The bet was taken. Within a week Hook had written and despatched 1,000 letters to different tradesmen, containing orders for goods to be delivered on one particular day, and as nearly as possible at one hour, from coals and potatoes, to books, prints, ices, jellies, two thousand five hundred raspberry tarts from half a hundred pastry-cooks &c., from dealers whose shops and warehouses extended from Whitechapel to Kensington. Nor was this all; he had written in most moving terms for the Lord Mayor and his chaplain to come and take the death-bed confession of a peculating common councilman. Similar missives were sent to the Governor of the Bank, the Chairman of the East India Company, a Lord Chief Justice, a Cabinet Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Duke of York. Hook had taken a lodging in the opposite house, and with one or two confidants ensconced behind his window curtains watched the fun. As the appointed hour approached the quiet street became blocked with carts and waggons; very quickly the block extended from one end of Oxford Road to the other, and every thoroughfare leading to it soon became unapproachable. And still on they came from east, west, north, and south, to swell the confusion. Mingled with tradesmen's wares were lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers of all kind, hair-dressers, milliners, divines, preachers, lovers to meet their sweethearts, Members of Parliament, even a carriage of the Commander-in-Chief. The horror of the inhabitants of the devoted house can be only faintly imagined. As the hoax became apparent, the turmoil increased, the indignant exclamations of genteel victims swelled the roar of anathemas that burst from the more vulgar ones. The vehicles were so jammed that extrication without considerable damage was impossible; the sides of carts and carriages were smashed in, and the crash of glass, china, and other breakables was awful to listen to; beer and wine barrels were overturned and their contents spilt upon the road, and when at length the different conveyances moved away, the

streets presented a spectacle such as might have followed a terrible fire or a shock of earthquake. The affair of course made a great sensation, and there was a loud outcry for the detection of the perpetrator. Hook was suspected by all his associates, but his confidence was well kept. He considered it necessary, however, to be ill for a week, and afterwards take a trip into the country. He was only twenty-three at the time, and this is the only excuse that can possibly be made for such a frolic.

To recount all the hoaxes and practical jokes in which he was concerned would be to write a small volume. Those who would learn more of them will find their curiosity amply gratified in the pages of 'Gilbert Gurney' and in the memoirs of Mathews, who was his associate in several. 'Of these,' says Lockhart, 'his own talk *inter pocula* was the only adequate memorial. We may catch some outline in his Gurney and Daly, but even his pen was too slow and cumbrous for the vital reproduction of such scenes. They are nothing without the commentary of that bright eye, the deep gurgling glee of his voice, the electrical felicity of his pantomime, for in truth he was as great an actor as would have been produced by rolling Liston and Terry and Mathews into one. So told, no mirth in this world ever surpassed the fascination of those early mountbankeries. We have seen austere judges, venerable prelates, grand lords, and superfine ladies, all alike overwhelmed and convulsed as he went over the minutest details of such episodes.'

Pass we on now to more serious matters. In 1812, his Royal Highness the Prince Regent did 'do something for Hook,' and something handsome too, appointing him Accountant General and Treasurer to Mauritius, with a salary of 2,000*l.* per annum. But the responsibilities of office brought with them no gravity to the irrepressible Theodore, who was as frolicsome and *sans souci* in the Indian island as he had been in the drawing-rooms of May Fair. 'We are here surrounded by every luxury,' he writes to Mathews, 'which art can furnish or dissipation suggest, in a climate the most delightful, in a country the most beautiful, with society the most gay, and pursuits the most fascinating.' And of this gay society he was the king. Neither did the dignity of his position repress his appetite for practical jokes. There is a story told of an extraordinary banquet he had prepared for some cockney visitors to the island. 'Allow me to offer you some cat curry,' he said to his astonished guests, who were surveying the various horrors of the table with faces sickly pale, 'or a little devilled monkey? I can strongly recommend those fried snakes; I'm aware there is a prejudice against them in England,

but they are excellent when you get used to them. Hand round those lizards, John, they seem particularly fire.' One of the victims said faintly that he would try a little lizard, but when it was transferred to his plate it caused a catastrophe almost as disagreeable as that recorded by Smollett in his dinner after the manner of the ancients. A second course of more edible and commonplace materials made up for the joke of the first. A yet more impudent trick, however, was that perpetrated at a public dinner at the government house. On the morning of the banquet the Governor was taken ill, and, by a curious coincidence, his second in command, who presided in his place, became so unwell during the meal that he was obliged to retire. Hook was now requested to take the chair, and propose the toasts, which he did with a vengeance. There was not a person present down to a sub-lieutenant whose health he did not insist upon being drunk with military honours, commanding salutes to be fired after each. When he had exhausted the officers and officials he added the servants of his Excellency's household, down to the cook and housemaid, whom he had up in the dining-room to return thanks, salutes being fired as before. The continuous roar of the cannon was deafening, and was only discontinued after the last grain of powder had been used.

But this gay and pleasant life was leading up to the darkest and saddest episode in Hook's career, one which cast a shadow over many years and threatened to blight his whole existence. An error to a large amount, was discovered in his accounts. The clerk Allan, by whom the deficiency was made known to the authorities, accused his principal of offering him a bribe to make his escape from the island. Soon afterwards Allan committed suicide. Hook was arrested, thrown into prison as a common malefactor; and after a few days sent to England under a military detachment to be tried for the alleged offence. Even under these gloomy circumstances his wit and spirits did not desert him. The vessel putting into St. Helena he there encountered Lord Charles Somerset, who was on his way to assume the governorship of the Cape, and who had heard nothing of Hook's arrest. 'I hope you are not going home for your health,' he said. 'Why,' replied the incorrigible Theodore, 'I am sorry to say they think there's something wrong in the chest.' Upon landing in England he was released from custody, the Attorney-General declaring that though Mr. Hook might be prosecuted for a civil debt, there was no ground for a criminal procedure.

A scrutiny, which lasted five years, failed to establish satisfactorily either his guilt or innocence. The deficit, which was at

first declared to be 22,000*l.*, was ultimately brought down to 12,000*l.*, for the payment of which he was held responsible. The most gross negligence both in keeping the books and in the care of the treasury was brought to light; but this told more in favour of his innocence than of his guilt, since among the numerous omitted entries of cash received and expended, many were against himself; and it appeared that the treasure boxes were frequently under the charge of subordinates, English, French, Indian, and mulatto clerks. No man could possibly be more unfitted by nature and habits for such an office than was Hook. 'Our own strong ultimate suspicion,' says an impartial biographer, Lockhart, 'is neither more nor less than that a *general laxity* had prevailed from the time when these motley myrmidons of the money bags hailed the arrival of the raw treasurer-in-chief, and took cognisance of his habits and manners, his utter ignorance of business and of account books, his open unmistrusting disposition, his gay pleasure-hunting existence in his new Eldorado. Let him be blamed as he deserves, but we may be pardoned for asking upon what principle, if he was ultimately considered guilty of more than negligence, was he not dealt with as a criminal and brought to justice for a most serious crime, more sharply than several other voluntary defaulters had been not very long before?'

It was in 1819 that he returned to England. His father was just dead, and he went to reside in a small cottage in Somers Town, wrote for the newspapers and periodicals, and set up one of his own, 'The Arcadian,' which, however, very soon died of inanition. He painfully felt the change in his position, thus fallen from honour and affluence to disgrace and penury. A few old trusty friends, Mathews, Terry, Hill (the original of Poole's Paul Pry), gathered about him. It was through the introduction of the first that he at this time made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott, who, like everyone else, was fascinated and delighted by his wit and conversation, and recommended him to a certain nobleman then in search of an editor for a paper about to be established in a county town. Sir Walter was always inclined to believe that it was to this recommendation Hook owed his position on 'John Bull,' which appeared a few months afterwards. This brings us to the most famous episode of his life.

The nation was at this period divided into two factions, the King's party and the Queen's, and never were two factions more virulent one against the other. Hook had already entered the field against the Queen in the summer of 1820, in a pamphlet entitled 'Tentamen, or an essay towards the History of Whittington and his Cat, by Dr. Vicesimus Blenkinsop.' Whittington was

Alderman Wood, the Queen was the cat. The projection of 'John Bull' was conducted with the utmost skill and secrecy; a fictitious editor, who never went beyond correcting a proof and was as ignorant of the authorship of the articles as the outside public, was engaged at a small salary to mask the real Simon Pure, who was carefully kept in the background. The first appearance of this Tory thunderbolt is thus graphically described by Barham in his 'Life of Hook.'

'Meanwhile the important day of publication arrived. A brief announcement, couched in terms sufficiently mysterious, had been for some weeks circulating among "the trade," but without attracting any extraordinary attention. And now, on the eventful December 16, 1820, let Hook and his coadjutors be imagined, seated in a small parlour, situated in a silent, traffickless spot enough, though within a hundred yards of the busiest thoroughfare in London, denominated Gough Square—torn newspapers, sheets of "copy," "slips," "revises," fresh, or rather foul, from the printer's hands, with all the many *désagréments* of an editor's room, scattered in confusion around—post hour drawing on—Hook himself fretting and fuming, fancying everything wrong, storming, apologizing, starting from his chair, pacing the apartment, stopping ever and anon to gulp down huge draughts of a suspicious-looking sedative, and in the whirl and agony of excitement uttering as many good things as would have supported his paper for a month—at length, unable to endure suspense, seizing brush and scissors, and by pasting the *dissecta membra*, the corrected "proofs," upon a blank sheet, endeavouring to frame a sort of Frankenstein similitude of the coming stranger, all eagerness, anxiety, apprehension;—when lo! just in time to save the night's mails, the reeking devilet enters, bending beneath the first impression.

'Within a few hours the town was in a blaze, orders arrived from every quarter, and the office was beset with applicants. Preparations for the distribution of the paper must have been made by its patrons to an extent unsuspected by the proprietors themselves, for so moderate had been the anticipations held as to the probable demand, that no more than 750 stamps had been procured. Hundreds of copies were in consequence struck off upon unstamped paper and issued in the course of that and the following day, the publisher making the proper affidavit and paying the extra duty on the Monday. The success was complete and unexampled; at the sixth week the sale reached ten thousand, the first five numbers were reprinted more than once, and the first and second actually kept in stereotype.'

No periodical ever produced so sudden and startling a sensation

from one end of the kingdom to the other. 'There was,' says Lockhart, 'talent of every kind, apparently, that could have been desired or devised for such a purpose. It seemed as if a legion of sarcastic devils had brooded in synod over the elements of withering derision.' Thomas Haynes Bayley, Barham—and the celebrated song, 'Michael's Dinner,' which celebrated the Whig defeat on the Reform Bill is ascribed to Canning—contributed probably a few articles, but the honour or dishonour which attaches to the authorship of nearly all the squibs, songs, and parodies which appeared in 'John Bull' from its first number until the death of the Queen, is Hook's alone. They are coarse, unsparing, and even shocking to our present ideas upon such subjects, but they are overflowing with wit and humour. An excellent collection, including one or two very scarce pieces, of these *débris* of the once fierce battle, was published by the late Mr. Camden Hotten under the title of 'Wit and Humour of Theodore Hook,' in which those curious upon by-gone scandals will find a rich harvest.

As soon as they had recovered from their first consternation, the Whigs bestirred themselves to crush this terrible enemy. The printer and editor were ordered to appear at the bar of the House of Commons to answer a charge of libel and breach of privilege; and were forthwith committed to Newgate. Every threat was used to make them divulge the names of the real culprits; a promise was made not only to stay further proceedings against them, but to pay down the sum of 500*l.* upon these conditions being fulfilled. In order to avoid being seen in company with the avowed proprietors, and to elude any watch that might be set upon the office, certain coffee-houses were selected, and designated by numbers ranging from one to ten, at which private conferences might be held and the business of the paper carried on. A note couched in the most melodramatic terms. 'To-night at half-past eight, No. 5,' was usually the sort of summons received by the printer to meet the great unknown at some obscure place of tryst in the purlieus of Westminster. By and by, Hook's name began to be whispered about in connection with 'John Bull;' but he endeavoured to avert the suspicion by the following impudent paragraph inserted therein: 'MR. THEODORE HOOK.—The conceit of some people is amusing. Our readers will see we have received a letter from Mr. Hook disclaiming all connexion with this paper. Partly out of good nature and partly from an anxiety to show this gentleman how little desirous we are of being associated with him, we have made a declaration which doubtless will be quite satisfactory to his morbid sensibility and affected squeamishness. We are free to confess that two things surprise us in this business: that

anything we have thought worth publishing should have been mistaken for *Mr. Hook's*, and secondly, that *such a person as Mr. Hook* should think himself disgraced by a connexion with JOHN BULL.' The cool audacity of this is highly characteristic of the writer.

I have no intention of defending Hook's virulent attacks upon, and abuse of, the unhappy wife of George the Fourth; it can only be said that they were justified by the code of the day, and after all were but retorts upon those who had exposed the private life of the King and abused him with equal unscrupulousness. As to the merits of either case, it would be difficult to find them.

In spite of all disclaimers, it was impossible that Hook's connexion with 'John Bull' could long remain a secret, and the Whigs revenged themselves for their flagellations by pushing on the Mauritius business. In 1823 the award was given, and he was declared debtor to the Crown for 12,000*l.*, was arrested and put in a spunging house in Shire Lane, where he remained nearly a year. He came out a changed man, pale and flabby in the face, with a figure fast tending to corpulency. He was now transferred to the King's Bench, a situation far more healthy and agreeable than his last, where he could frequently obtain leave of absence to dine out with a friend; but as a rule the greater part of his time was taken up by literary work. After the death of the Queen, 'John Bull' became less scurrilous. Upon its first starting he had realised 2,000*l.* a year (half the profits), but this income began to slowly dwindle. He now started several other literary ventures, among others 'The London Literary Journal,' but all failed. In 1824, however, he appeared as a novelist in the first series of 'Sayings and Doings.' The sale amounted to six thousand copies. Colburn, who had paid him 600*l.* for the copyright, afterwards presented him with cheques for 150*l.* and 200*l.*, and gave him 1,000*l.* for the second series which followed in the next year. He was released from the King's Bench in 1825, but with the understanding that the debt must be paid to the last farthing. Then he took a house at Putney, where old friends again rallied round him, while his fame as a novelist opened to him once more the gates of high society. Adversity, however, had taught him no lesson, and instead of economising to rid himself of that impending sword, he plunged into an extravagant style of living, removed to a house in Cleveland Row, gave grand dinner parties, and, as a natural consequence, became burdened with new debts. By and by he had to remove to a smaller establishment at Fulham; all the time, amidst all his numerous fashionable engagements, working terribly hard, and

covering more paper with MS., says Lockhart, 'than would have proved in almost any other man's case the energetic exertion of every hour in every day that passed over his head.'

'We may venture,' says Barham, 'to supply, by way of specimen, a sketch by no means overcharged, of one of those restless, life-exhausting days in which the seemingly iron energies of Theodore Hook were prematurely exhausted. A late breakfast, his spirits jaded by the exertions of yesterday, and further depressed by the weight of some pecuniary difficulty—large arrear of literary toil to be made up—the meal sent away untasted—every power of his mind forced and strained for the next four or five hours upon the subject that happens to be in hand—then, a rapid drive to town, and a visit first to one club, where, the centre of an admiring circle, his intellectual faculties are again upon the stretch, and again aroused and sustained by artificial means; the same thing repeated at a second—the same drain and the same supply—a ballot, or "general meeting," at a third, the chair taken by Mr. Hook, who, as a friend observes, addresses the members, produces the accounts, audits and passes them, gives a succinct statement of the prospects and finances of the society, parries an awkward question, extinguishes a grumbler, confounds an opponent, proposes a vote of thanks to himself, carries it, and returns thanks with a vivacious rapidity that entirely confounds the unorganised schemes of the minority, then a chop in the committee room, and "just one tumbler of brandy and water or two," and we fear the catalogue would not always close there. Off next to take his place at some lordly banquet, where the fire of wit is again to be stirred into dazzling blaze, and fed by fresh supplies of potent stimulants. Lady A—— has never heard one of his delightful *extempores*, the pianoforte is at hand,* fresh and more vigorous efforts of fancy, memory, and application are called for, all the wondrous machinery of the brain taxed and strained to the very utmost, smiles and applause reward the exertion; and perhaps one more chanson, if he has shewn himself thoroughly in the vein, is craved as a special favour, or possibly, if the call has been made too early or too late, some dull-witted gentleman hints that he is a little disappointed in Mr. Hook, and the host admits that he has not been so happy as he has known him. He retires at last, but not to rest, not home. Half an hour at Crockford's is proposed by some gay companion, as they quit together. We need not continue the picture; the half-hour is quadrupled, and the excitement of the preceding evening is as nothing to that which now ensues. Whether he rises from the table a winner or loser, by the time he has reached Fulham the reaction is complete, and in a state of utter prostration, bodily and

mental, he seeks his pillow, with, perhaps, a precisely similar course on the morrow.'

It is said that while on a visit to some great nobleman he used every Wednesday night, after the family had retired to rest, to steal out of the house, enter a post-chaise that was waiting for him, and ride fifty miles across country, to meet the printer to arrange the forthcoming number of 'John Bull,' and get back to the castle by the time the dressing bell was ringing; his servant having intimated during the day that his master was too indisposed to leave his room. At the dinner-table he would be as gay and brilliant as ever, although his mind might be racked by a thousand anxieties, unpaid bills, money lost at play, arrears of work, books neglected which had to be finished within a certain time. The matchless wit and humourist whom half the world envied for his brilliant gifts, and the exclusive circles in which he moved, when alone, as his diary proves, was as miserable a man as could be found with a roof over his head. 'January 1, 1840,' he writes in his Journal. 'To-day another year opens upon me with a vast load of debt and many encumbrances. I am suffering under constant anxiety and depression of spirits, which nobody who sees me in society dreams of: but why should I suffer my own private worries to annoy my friends?' This constant feverish excitement and mental strain, together with the hard drinking habits which still lingered among the men of the Regency, would have worn out a constitution of iron; and of such had been Hook's. His health broke rapidly. 'In May 1841,' writes his biographer, 'he dined for the last time with Mr. Barham; the party had been made up, in a great measure, for the purpose of bringing together him and Lord —, one of the few magnates in literature and wit with whom he was not previously acquainted. Hook came late and appeared feeble and out of spirits, but he soon rallied, and throughout the evening, fortunately not prolonged until his powers were exhausted, bore himself bravely in the convivial tourney with his noble rival.' Dining a little later with a friend at Brompton, as he stood in the drawing-room with his coffee in his hand, he turned to the mirror and exclaimed: 'Ay, I see I look as I am—done up in purse, in mind, and in body too at last.' He tried hard, however, to hide the ravages of time and disease, and 'made up' with as much care as an old actor who plays juvenile parts. Caught one day *en déshabille*, by an unexpected visitor, he said: 'Well, you see me as I am at last—all the bucklings, and paddings, and washings, and brushings dropped for ever—a poor old grey-haired man with my belly about my knees.' Up to within a fortnight of his death he spent many hours daily at his

desk working upon a novel he left unfinished, 'Peregrine Bunce.' He died on August 24, 1841, at his house at Fulham, and is buried in the churchyard of that parish. The funeral was a private one, only a few obscure people attending it, none of his brilliant friends and patrons thinking it necessary to pay this last tribute to a man whose talents had so frequently delighted and amused them. Neither did they subscribe to the fund which was raised for the unhappy lady who had been a wife to him in all but name, and her fatherless children; except the King of Hanover, who generously sent 500*l*.

It is said that at 'the Athenæum' the diners fell off nearly three hundred yearly after Hook was no longer to be found in his corner near the coffee-room door. Dozens of gentlemen dined there two or three times a week in the season merely for the chance of getting near his table to catch some of his good things. In order not to shock the more grave frequenters of the club, when he wanted whisky or brandy he used to call for tea or lemonade, from which his place was slyly called 'Temperance Corner.'

There was a tender and even romantic side to the character of this wit, humourist, and brilliant man of the world, which few suspected in his life. Twice his affections had been seriously engaged, but something had interposed to thwart them; there are entries in his diary which prove the wounds were not easily, if ever, healed. 'They put me in what used to be her room,' he writes, after visiting a friend's house; 'I lay in her bed, —'s bed! Oh, God, what a night!' There are passages, too, in this record which bespeak a mind not destitute of religious reverence. 'September 22, 1831.—My birthday—why to be kept joyously I know not, and yet I thank God humbly and heartily for all the blessings He has been pleased to vouchsafe to me, and those whom I scarcely dare call mine.' 'October 9, 1835.—To-day to work in various ways. I am anxious and unhappy; but God, who knows my heart, and to whom I devoutly pray, not for myself, but for others who are, as far as they are concerned, innocent children of mine; but I have faith in His goodness, and, sinner as I am, I *do* hope He will preserve me for their sakes.'

While books of *ana* and anecdote exist, the sayings and doings of Theodore Hook can never die; for who else, except Foote, ever said so many good things worth preserving? I can find room for only two or three specimens.

While dining at Hatfield one day, Lady Salisbury remarked him making a series of bows without any apparent cause. At length she ventured to ask the reason of this eccentric behaviour. 'The fact is,' replied Hook, 'I have been accustomed all my life to those

social recognitions at table which are now interdicted by fashion; and as I can't quite get out of the habit, I usually "take wine" with the *epergne* and bow to the flowers.'

A friend viewing Putney Bridge from his terrace, enquired of him if it were a good investment—if it really answered. 'I don't know,' he replied, 'but you have only to cross it and you are sure to be *tolled*.' When Abbot and Egerton took the Coburg Theatre in 1836, for the purpose of producing the legitimate drama, Abbot asked Hook if he could suggest a new name, the old being too much identified with blue fire and broad-sword combats to suit the new style of entertainment. 'Why,' was the answer, 'as of course you will butcher everything you attempt, suppose you call it the *Abattoir*.'

As a novelist he has fallen into undeserved oblivion. The best of his novels are scarcely inferior in comic power to Dickens's most successful works. Indeed, there is a great similarity between the two humourists, the same tendency to exaggeration and caricature. 'In casting our eyes over the volumes,' says Barham, 'we are at a loss to point out a single character of importance that has not its prototype, or an incident—the most incredible, the most true—that is not in some measure founded upon fact.' Some of the best known persons of the day, so little disguised as to be easily recognisable, were introduced in his novels. He himself and Sam Beazley, architect and dramatist, divided Gilbert Gurney and Daly between them; Hull was the noted Tom Hill, before mentioned as the original of Poole's 'Paul Pry'; Godfrey Moss in 'Maxwell,' the Rev. Edward Canon, the King's Chaplain, &c. Nor was the *vis comica* his only excellence. There is a power in 'Maxwell' and 'Cousin William' not inferior to the best sensation novelist of the day. Yet all his works were composed hurriedly, under high pressure; the plots are badly constructed, and the whole requires finish. But his powers of observation, his profound knowledge of human nature, his fun, the excellence of his detached scenes must ever place him in a high rank among novelists; and a perusal of his bygone books, were it only for the striking pictures they give of bygone men and manners, would still prove more profitable and amusing than that of three-fourths of those which have no other claim to attention than their being new.

The Mysterious Speculator.

‘ANOTHER shilling to-day! Wheat is lively this year.’

‘Ay. Brown and Thompson have forty thousand quarters afloat. They’ll realise something by it if matters keep on like this.’

‘This kind of thing makes business look wholesome. Give me jumps of any kind rather than the same prices in the lists from month to month.’

‘I’m not so wild as that. I like to know what I’m doing.’

‘I confess I don’t. I prefer letting luck do my business.’

‘You were born for the Stock Exchange, Garston.’

‘Wish I had been brought up to it. But what’s the use of wishing? Is anyone going to have luncheon? I’m famished.’

‘Here comes old Parker. Wonder why he isn’t in this year? He’s been in when things were dead against him and all of us; and now he won’t touch stuff when there’s a chance of pulling back the two bad years.’

‘But he always was an odd fellow—always.’

‘What’s he doing with that place of his? I’m told a sack of wheat or corn wasn’t seen in it this year.’

‘Well, not many, any way.’

‘Poor old fellow! he’s beginning to get very weak at the knees.’

‘Ah, yes! But he’s over seventy a good bit.’

‘He must be seventy-five.’

‘Or thereabouts.’

A tall, bent, white-haired old man passed the group, saluting the speakers as he went by. He had once been a very fine man, six feet at least, and broad and shapely. But now he drooped heavily, his shoulders hung forward over his chest, and he glided rather than walked.

For many years this man, William Parker by name, had been one of the leading importers of corn and wheat in the city of Watsley. He held a large store in a by-street off the quay, and had employed a great number of men. All at once, at the beginning of the year in which the conversation reported occurred on the steps of the Watsley Chamber of Commerce, William Parker gave up the corn trade. He discharged his labourers and clerks, and without issuing a circular to his friends, he took no notice of their correspondence. He had been a man of singular habits;

silent, mysterious, unsocial. No one in the city had ever eaten or drunk with him. He and his wife lived buried away from the world in a small secluded suburban house. There was but one domestic servant, an old gap-toothed woman, who, it was reported, had nursed Mrs. Parker, and had never been separated from the lady since that time. Mrs. Parker, a mild, gentle, slender, delicate woman, was much addicted to prayer and monotonous goodness of nature. By force of long habit she had separated herself almost as thoroughly from the world as if the end of her prayers had been reached. She was not a native of Watsley, and many said that she was Mr. Parker's social inferior. At all events, they never went into society, and having no children were almost forgotten as inhabitants of the suburb.

Whatever may have been the origin of Mrs. Parker, she regarded her husband with the most unlimited respect, not unmingled with fear. She looked up to him as an oracle, and would have denied the evidence of her senses if his word were against it. One of the most remarkable things about Mr. Parker was that, although no one had ever seen him in a passion or known him to be harsh or unreasonable, still everyone brought close to him stood in a kind of fear. He had an absent-minded way of forgetting the presence of others, and this in no small degree impressed his household and business servants with a kind of awe. Add to this was a taciturnity of the most rigid character. He often spent hours without once speaking although people were near, and frequently Mrs. Parker had known him to come home after business and return to it the next morning in silence.

He and his wife lived in a simple, not to say penurious, manner. 'Why, his own clerks are better clad,' some one said on the Chamber of Commerce steps.

'He must have a lot of money.'

'You may swear that.'

'What do you think he's worth, dry?'

'Thirty.'

'Thirty thousand! Nearer a hundred thousand, I should think. All in foreign securities.'

'And then his business taken with and with can't be less than three to four thousand a year.'

'That at least.'

'Odd fish!'

'Very.'

And in the warmth of the August sunlight the men canvassed the old man as he walked down the street.

There was much speculation in Watsley concerning what old

Parker would do with his money. As far as was known, he had not a single relative but his wife. No doubt he'd leave her a life-interest in the bulk of his fortune, and most probably bequeath the reversion to a charitable institution. Perhaps he'd found an hospital, or will his savings for the purchase of a park. He was growing old, and had secured more than ever he could use, so that he was wise to give up business. But why did he keep on the store? The rent must be considerable, and now it was plain he did not intend pursuing trade further. But wasn't it strange he had never tried to sell the business? It would have fetched a handsome sum, and what a pity to see a trade formed so carefully through many years dispersed for mere want of some one willing to carry it on! and with what scant courtesy he had treated his old friends and dealers!

As the weeks slipped away a change was noticed in the old man. He had always been in the habit of taking luncheon at a restaurant frequented by the merchants of the city; now he went there no more. Throughout the day he sat in a little back office reading newspapers and writing letters. He had always kept so much aloof that few men went near him now, but those who did always found him poring over a newspaper through his silver-rimmed spectacles, or bent at his desk letter-writing.

'What on earth can old Parker be always poking after in that dingy hole of an office?'

'No one knows. He doesn't send any circulars or letters now to his old customers. I know several of them, and for all they get from him they say he might as well be in his grave.'

'Well, since he has nothing to sell, I don't see any great use in sending circulars, or writing letters offering it.'

'It's an age since I saw him lunching at Morrison's. Has he given up eating as well as business?'

'Ha-ha-ha! He's stingy enough to try it. What a fool a man is to go on hoarding like that and denying himself the comforts of life!'

'By the by, talking of eating, Garston told me he went in a week or two ago and found the old miser toasting a piece of cheese over a slice of bread. Just fancy that!'

'What o'clock was that at?' demanded Ned Plummer, one of the greatest humourists of Watsley.

'About half-past one.'

'Look here, by Jove, it must be fun to see the old fellow feed. I'll drop in on him to-morrow. I'll ask a question about something or other.'

'Short answer you'll get.'

At the time named Ned Plummer next day strolled with a thoughtful air into Mr. Parker's store. It was close to the end of September and very cold. The old man was seated at a small fire; his head thrown back, his eyes fixed abstractedly on the fire, his hands resting on his knees, his shrunken chest thrust forward. On the desk behind him lay several newspapers.

So deep was the old man's reverie that he did not notice Ned's entry. The young man stood behind his chair for a moment. Mr. Parker muttered aloud,

'I'll have two hundred more of those Bolivians and four hundred Great Western. That will be, let me see, let me see. . . Well, never mind, it's all right. Even if I can't do anything better with them, and I know I can, I'll keep them. The Bolivians are sure to come right.'

This was somehow out of key with the spirit of Ned Plummer's visit, although there appeared almost a ludicrous contrast between such transactions and toasting a pennyworth of cheese to flavour a roll. Ned Plummer had inadvertently made a discovery which went far to explain away Mr. Parker's recent actions, and which at the same time rather dulled the edge of Ned Plummer's humour by disclosing the easy way this old man handled large sums of money. An idea occurred to him by following which he might get further into the secrets.

'Good day, Mr. Parker,' he said briskly, at the same time moving his feet as though he had but just come in.

The old man did not hear, he sat still gazing into the fire.

'Good day, Mr. Parker,' repeated Plummer in a louder voice.

Mr. Parker slowly turned his head round, looked at the speaker with a dull, lack-lustre, introspective eye, and muttered mechanically, 'Good day.' It was quite plain he did not recognise his visitor. The image of the young man was in his brain, but the brain did nothing with the guest who entered through the eyes. No sooner had he spoken than he fixed his glance once more on the fire.

Plummer shuffled his feet to try and arouse him, and said 'Mr. Parker, I have a few hundred pounds to invest, and as I know you are well acquainted with all the good things going, I thought I'd take the liberty of asking you what would be best.'

During the course of this speech the sitting man stood up and confronted the other. All vagueness and uncertainty had left his eyes, and instead of the dull gaze there was a quick, sharp glint in them.

'Yes, young Plummer, you did quite right to come to me

and my best advice is at your service. I do happen to know something about the markets.'

'It's only three hundred, but I may as well have it in a safe thing; and a good thing as well.'

'Certainly; and I can put you in the way of it.' He spoke with cordiality and animation.

'You do a great deal in that way?'

The old man smiled a deprecatory smile, shook his head playfully, and whispered, 'Yes, a little.'

'By Jove,' thought the young man, 'but old Parker is altered! Why, he's quite sociable and friendly. What can be the matter? He must be making money like slates.' Then he said aloud, 'And I suppose you find it to do pretty well?'

'Do!' he exclaimed with enthusiasm, drawing himself up to his greatest height. 'Do! Why, young Plummer, alchemy need never be thought of now! There is the Stock Exchange. Just look here.' He produced from a drawer a number of slips of paper. Each slip contained an account for one week. The figures were enormous, and young Plummer ran them down with something approaching dread.

Mr. Parker went on: 'My transactions last month reached to a total of one million two hundred and four thousand six hundred and forty-nine pounds fourteen and tenpence.'

The young man stood aghast. His imagination was appalled by the enormity of these figures. He waited for the other to speak again.

'The nett profit after deducting all losses and charges was not contemptible. I made two thousand three hundred and six pounds one and sevenpence, as you may see on examination.'

'Suppose, sir, I were to place my few hundreds in your hands, would you be kind enough to invest them for me? You are familiar with such matters, and I know nothing about them.' When Plummer had spoken first of investing money, he had no intention of doing anything of the kind. But the splendours now revealed to him completely dazzled his eyes. 'Of course,' he thought, 'I couldn't ask him to speculate for me with my money; that would be too much.' Thus, he who had come 'to scoff remained to pray.'

'I shall be most happy indeed, my young friend. There is nothing would give me more pleasure. I knew your father well: a most upright and honourable trader, and my services in such matters may be fully relied on by his son.'

Wonder on wonders! Not only had the dull silent old man told all about his business, but moreover offered to do his best for one

who had comparatively a slight knowledge of him; what miracle had been wrought in his nature! Had success changed a silent, isolated, abstracted man into an enthusiast overflowing with anxiety to befriend? Here was the discoverer of the philosopher's stone keeping it no secret, but expounding and sharing it as freely as if it were air.

Ned Plummer went away like one in a dream. Without being conscious of the turns he was taking, he drifted towards the Chamber of Commerce, on the steps of which he found Garston and others.

'Well, did you see the old fellow at his bun and cheese?'

'No.'

'You are usually a lucky fellow, Plummer; how do you account for your misfortune?'

'He is immensely connected with stock speculations.'

'Ah! Is that it? We always thought there was something of that kind on.'

'And he was as cordial and friendly with me as if I were his own son. So changed a man I never met. I didn't think a miracle could do it.'

Ned Plummer then related all that had passed. His listeners were for a while incredulous, but at length they began to see he was quite serious and truthful; and when the little after-luncheon gossip was concluded, the men went away somewhat depressed by the history of their neighbour's success.

Next day young Plummer brought the money.

They had a long conversation in the course of which the old man went further into details of gigantic operations. One thing struck young Plummer as peculiar. With all this vast buying and selling, telegraph boys never entered that store. He was now on such familiar terms with the speculator that he felt he might put a question without risk.

'You use the wires a good deal?'

'No, never.'

'Never!'

'Never.' He rose with a smile and drew a huge roll of paper from a drawer. Before unfolding it he said: 'It is only the tyro who is not aware of what is going to happen until it is necessary to use the wires. The man who cannot see clearly four-and-twenty hours ahead has no business to risk a sixpence. Unless you can gauge the consequence of remote causes, keep away from the brokers.' He spread out the paper. It was as large as a sea chart, and presented the appearance of the plan of a battle. At the top were parallelograms of red ink, characterised by initial capital letters,

From these parallelograms hung a number of black ink lines, not parallel to one another but waving now this way, now the other, and not all the one way. On the left and right margins of the paper there were dates, and inside the dates words.

‘You see,’ the old man explained, pointing to the red marks and the initials, ‘these are the various kinds of stock; the lines represent the course of variations, those to the right indicating an upward tendency, those to the left a decline. The dates on the left-hand side are of the day present, the dates on the right of the next day to that one on which the continuation of the line to the date on the left is made. Thus the right is always twenty-four hours in advance of the left, that is at morning. The words on the left show events which absolutely influenced the market that day; the words on the right those in the future which I calculate upon influencing the market on the next day. If you look closely you will see that in no single instance have I made an important false anticipation. That is the way I work.’

While Mr. Parker exhibited and expounded the chart there was almost a feverish anxiety in his earnestness. His whole soul seemed centred on the pages.

The young man looked in awe at the singular engine by which almost a million and a quarter had been played with in the course of a single month. He felt stupefied and dull, and ran his finger down the margins, reading the words as though they were in a tongue but little known to him. When his eyes reached the end of the left-hand column, he glanced across the sheet to observe the predictions for the next day. A moment he seemed at a loss; passed his finger from the date across the horizontal lines, and then looked up, saying in a tone of respectful inquiry,

‘Mr. Parker, you will excuse my remarking it, such enormous sums may depend on it, but you have not posted the fluctuations for to-morrow?’

The old man started and, fixing his spectacles on his nose, looked. ‘Bless my soul!’ he cried hastily and with a slight tinge of colour in his pale thin cheeks and an obvious trembling of the hands. ‘You are quite right. In my anxiety to arrange my own transactions for to-morrow, I quite forgot. But I have it all so clearly in my head, that I fancy I see it before me. I had better put it down at once. Give me the money, and I shall make this all right in half an hour.’

The young man handed him the money, and retired.

When William Parker was alone he closed the door of his office and began striding up and down in great excitement. He passed his hand through his thin white hair. Inflating his chest,

he threw back his shoulders and looked proudly around. His eyes shone brightly, and his whole air was that of a man who after a long struggle with fate had triumphed at last.

‘Ha!’ he muttered exultingly, ‘my system vindicates itself! People begin to see how simple a discovery has reduced stock-jobbing to a certainty. I shall write to the newspapers about my invention. I don’t want to monopolise. Only for the excitement, I should not touch another speculation. I’d realise all doubtful or purely speculative ventures and lock up safely in mortgages on land, or in Consols, or something of that kind. But I must have matter to employ my mind. It won’t do for me to sit brooding all day. I’ve been too much given to that kind of thing, and it won’t do to go on brooding now. No, no!’

The latter portion of this speech was uttered in a tone of half anger, half fear, and at the last two words he shook his fist in a threatening manner.

After a moment’s silence he continued more calmly,

‘I’ll turn over a new leaf. That’s what I must do. I’m too much isolated. I’m too lonely. I’ve been all my life eating my head away with this thinking, and now I’m grown old and require a little relaxation. Besides, I know people will welcome the inventor of the great key to success on the Stock Exchange. They are sure to want to see me. I’ll turn over a new leaf and go about more. There is no good in my keeping this place on. I’ll give it up. I can do all my writing at home, and maybe towards the end of this year I’ll withdraw altogether from money transactions. But here’s young Plummer’s three hundred—that must be invested. I must write this afternoon. I may as well do it now. Let me see; let me see.’

He placed his open palm on his forehead and stood awhile in thought. Then sitting down he resumed his soliloquy while arranging his papers. ‘The best thing for this young man is three of the New Amalgamated Discounting Company’s. They’re now at 98 and are sure to be 105 before three months. I’ll get him three of them. I can’t help liking that young man, and I’ll do my utmost for him both now and at any other time he may want me; he was the first to ask my advice and behold my system, and I shall always look on him as the most intelligent man in Watsley.’

On his way home that evening he was in such excellent spirits that he stopped and spoke to two or three men he knew, and acquainted them with his intention of giving up his store, and resting himself from all business cares. With the most friendly frankness, he informed each that he had been a heavy and successful speculator on the Stock Exchange, and that, as he had done so

well, and did not wish to be much longer burdened with the great weight of thought, he would most likely in a few more months abandon jobbing altogether.

All whom he had spoken to were astonished at his unusual loquacity, and each agreed that old Parker had talked more to him then than in a month of any previous time. Success improves some men, they said, and here was an instance.

When he got home he informed his wife of all his new resolutions, and furthermore, that he contemplated altering their establishment and living in a manner more suited to their fortunes. Then for the first time in all his life, he went into details of his financial affairs, until his wife stared with amazement.

She fell to wondering later why he had hoarded all this money, and lived so meanly. They had no child to leave it to. Of late he had been more penurious than ever, and the very evening that he told her he owned absolutely more than half a million sterling there was not a single shilling in her possession, and a better dinner than she had been able to provide might easily be found in the house of an artisan.

At night she lay awake thinking of all his wealth, and sadly lamenting they had no child or grandchild to whom they might leave it. They were now both quite old; the period of enjoyment was passed, and in the decline of life, towards the limit of that decline, they had become so enormously rich that she could form no conception of the sum. Oh that one child had been given to them! But now all this wealth would go among strangers, whose hearts were barren of love for them, whom they had never loved.

Next morning Parker seemed in even better spirits. There was a tinge of colour in his pale cheek and a great brightness in his eyes.

'Do you know, my dear,' he said to his wife, as they sat at breakfast, 'I have decided on delaying no longer to show my friends my plan of operating on the Exchange, and I purpose taking the plan with me to-day to the Chamber and explaining it to them?'

As he went out, his wife, to her intense astonishment, heard him hum an air.

He hastened to his office and remained there till noon. Then taking out his chart, he proceeded with it under his arm to the Chamber of Commerce, and walked into the reading-room.

The Chamber of Commerce in Watsley is situated in a street running parallel to the quay, and as the quay is very wide and only a few yards distant, and more pleasant, the street has no great traffic. At noon most of the merchants of the city found their

way to the Chamber, for then the second supply of telegrams came. Old Mr. Parker never missed noon at the Chamber, and consequently his arrival caused no surprise. But some looked at the huge roll of papers, and the flush in the cheek, and the brightness in the eyes.

The old man awaited his opportunity with a little impatience. The telegrams at length appeared, were read, discussed, and blessed or cursed. Then, just as the talk about them was flagging, the old white-haired man stepped up to a table in the centre of the room and unrolled his chart, saying in a full firm voice,

‘Gentlemen, will you allow me to show you an invention of mine by which I govern my speculations on the Stock Exchange?’

‘Holloa! Fennes! back from the sea? Hope you enjoyed it?’

‘Oh, yes, very much indeed, thank you. We had such lovely weather. What news since?’

‘I suppose you heard of poor old Parker?’

‘I saw only a short account in a paper. Tell me all about it.’

‘Well, you see, he never was so rich a man as we thought him, and the last two bad years stranded him altogether. As you know, he always paid cash and got cash; he was working very neatly, and was cleaned out, with a swept floor, last January, both for stock and cash. This acted on his mind to such a degree that it turned it. He used to write letters and put them into a safe. These letters were all addressed to a London stockbroker, and made belief to buy and sell enormous quantities of stocks and shares; but there really never had been any purchase or sale at all. You must know young Plummer went one day into the store and heard him talking to himself about large transactions. He asked him to invest some few hundreds for him. The poor old fellow promised, and next day showed him a plan or chart by which he said he guided his speculations. Well, the day after he walked into the Chamber with this chart, and spread it out on the table. We all noticed his bright eyes and flushed cheeks, and whispered how well he was looking. Just before beginning to explain about the chart, he looked up and said, “Gentlemen, in my old days I am going to put on the new man and turn over a new leaf!”

‘The words were hardly out of his mouth when he bent forward, and fell flat on the table. We sent for doctors, but they said he was dead: heart disease and over-excitement.’

‘Poor old Parker! I’m really very sorry; it’s enough to make a man quite melancholy. What of Plummer’s money?’

‘Oh, that was all right. The poor old fellow was loyal, and sent off the money; Plummer has the value, and everyone thinks they’re a good investment. The doctors said that having had so many imaginary dealings and no real one, and a real one coming at last, made the old fellow mad altogether, and brought about his sudden death.’

‘No doubt—no doubt. Poor old fellow! we’ll miss him.’

RICHARD DOWLING.

A Home without 'Hands.'

It is more than twenty years since 'The Greatest Plague of Life,' which had for its subject our domestics, was published, and the Plague is not stayed. Indeed, people begin to speak of the servants of twenty years ago as if they were angels in comparison with those of to-day. Our present ones, however, have at least this attribute in common with angels—they have wings and fly away. It is marvellous to the student of human nature, who is also a householder, to observe their love of change. One would really think, presuming that 'a young person' found herself tolerably comfortable in a family and fairly treated, that she would be slow to leave it for another; averse to exchange even certain inconvenience for evils that she knows not of, but might easily guess. It is not generally known that in below-stair circles, a domestic who has had the want of spirit to remain under the same roof for more than two years is known as 'a Frump.' 'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new' has become our servants' motto.

What is still sadder is that mistresses are not sorry to part with them after this short experience. The new housemaid sweeps clean; but in a very few days, flue—and worse—begins to accumulate. The new cook—but this is too melancholy a subject to be dwelt upon. Who does not know the rapid gradations of the master of the house's criticisms from 'A Perfect Treasure!' down to 'My dear, this woman is poisoning us'? Very often she *begins* with poisoning us. There is nobody so promising as a new cook; and, alas, none whose promises so signally fail in bearing fruit—or, at least, anything else *but* fruit: it is possible she may be able to stew pears. It is not that desire outlives performance, for she has neither the will nor the skill. She knows nothing, and will not be taught. It seems to me that women decide upon becoming cooks just as men go into the wine trade—not because they know anything at all about it, but because they are conscious they are fit for nothing else, and it is comparatively genteel.

'For, cooking for a small family, John,' says the poet, 'is a most golluptious life,' but it does not always make life 'golluptious' for the small family.

Thinking much over these calamities, and estimating the supposed panacea for them, the Lady Help, at her true value (expressed mathematically by the sign $\sqrt{-1}$), an intrepid

woman has just published a book to show how we can do without the Greatest Plague of Life altogether. It is called 'Household Organization,' and takes its motto from no less a personage than the Emperor Marcus Aurelius:—'From my tutor I learnt endurance and to want little and to work with my own hands.' The lady's name is Mrs. Caddy—a very fit one for so domestic a writer—and the work is published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. Although our authoress makes what is somewhat Hibernically termed 'a clean sweep,' and might be therefore supposed to be somewhat *ultra* in her opinions, she is very just and fair: only occasionally betraying the little weaknesses of her sex in onslaughts on tobacco (a sure cure for 'temper,' Madam, we do assure you) and on the indolence and inutility of the male. The old patriarchal feeling, which of old bound servant to master, has died out, she at once allows, on both sides: 'we rate our servants [she means *estimate*, not *blow up*] as we do our tradespeople who come periodically to polish our bright stoves, clean our chandeliers and wind our clocks, and only care whether they do their specified work well or ill, taking no further trouble about them; sometimes we treat them as the horses who draw our carriage, and see that they are well fed accordingly; and sometimes we look upon them as machines merely.' We have 'drifted into habits of great expense, and have allowed our houses to be filled with a greedy and destructive class, for this simple reason—that we are idle. Gloss it over as we may by calling it a desire to reserve time for higher aims, the truth remains the same: we neglect our duties in order that we may live in idleness and devote ourselves to pleasure. Like the southern planters, we have got to consider Labour disgraceful. If a visitor calls, a young lady who is making the bodice of a dress will shove it under the sofa cushion and affect to be engaged upon a gold-braided smoking-cap half worked at the shop. We can neglect our children, leaving them to vulgar associations and worse, in order that we may have leisure for frivolities.' These are hard words, but they are truths. The book, though very funny as we shall show, has bits of good sense in it. For example, 'Housekeeping,' it says, 'is one of a girl's natural instincts; when a child has no real work of the kind, mark how she takes to dolls' houses; it is only quenched by (so-called) accomplishments being put in its stead.'

In the preface there is a little treatise on Turkish finance, and a hint at fallen fortunes, which suggests that the experiment to be narrated was dictated by necessity; but it will be seen that the poverty was of a very genteel description indeed—quite a high-art sort of poverty—and the authoress is by no means one of that dreadful sort who boasts of having seen better days. The

better days were those in which she had discarded servants altogether.

'Let us Englishwomen,' is her stirring appeal, 'make an effort to rescue ourselves from this bondage [to our domestics], this constant drain on our resources; and leaving to men the duty to the state, let us seek our work in the rule and guidance of the house, securing, as Ruskin says, "its order, comfort, and loveliness." But especially must we insist upon its loveliness.' There was a little book published some years ago, called 'How to dress on fifteen pounds a year,' which aroused the fiercest indignation in every woman and the most delusive hopes in her lord and master, and the advice contained in which would have been priceless had not the authoress taken it for granted that everyone to whom it was addressed had, *to start with*, a very extensive, not to say luxurious wardrobe, which only required small additions during her natural life: and the weak point of 'Household Organization' seems to us to lie in the same direction, though it is fair to say that the writer in this case seems to be aware of its existence. She acknowledges that the alterations necessary to be made in a house without servants would cost what, to fall in with her æsthetic views, we may call 'a pretty penny,' but she contends that, once made, the expense would be repaid within the year by the saving of servants' wages, and waste, and habits of destruction.

I had got this far in the exposition of our author's views, in a private account which I was giving of them to an ancient lady of experience, when she abruptly stopped me with this appalling remark: 'It is all very fine to talk of doing without servants, and letting one's daughter do all the work of the house, but Who is to empty the slops?' A parlous question indeed: but our authoress is equal to it. In this Elysium, all the basins are provided with plugs and pipes that communicate with the waste pipe. There is no difficulty at all, in fact, where one would think difficulties were insuperable. 'The tug of war,' as our authoress calls it, is somewhere else. 'Men will do much for glory and for vain-glory, even to using cold shower-baths in winter, and to breaking the ice in them; but I never yet heard of the man who would take the trouble to empty his bath after using it.' No woman, we are informed, is equal to the task of turning the water out of a large flat bath into a pail single-handed. This is the crucial test of the superiority of the male, and yet he won't do it. You can't get a man 'to enjoy his tub, pour away the water, put up his tub, and say nothing about it.' [Diogenes was probably the only exception.]

Of course lighting fires is not an agreeable occupation for

young ladies : but it is light work enough when 'all the stoves are gas stoves.' The gas fire is 'the keynote of my system of domestic economy.' Can the most delicate woman 'think it a hardship to light the tripod in the breakfast-room, whereon stands an enamelled kettle ready filled over-night, or else a coffee-pot always full, and only waiting for the match to be struck to make it hot?' The description of the tripod, when subsequently used for the eggs to be boiled on it, or the bacon or kidneys fried, is a most appetising one : but it is not to be compared to the Watteau-like picture of washing up the breakfast things, when the horrid men are gone to their business. 'From the sideboard drawer will be taken a neatly folded tea-cloth, ornamented *most probably* [this is a charming touch] with open work at each end, or adorned with colour in the style of the Russian household linen in the collection of the Duchess of Edinburgh.' This is what a dishcloth is sublimed to in our era of domestic 'loveliness.' Another sylph is in the mean time, we will not say 'dusting the drawing-room,' but 'the feather brush is being wielded as a wand' in that apartment by a lady housemaid, who is recommended to wear a muslin cap to keep the dust from her silken tresses ; nay, the very style is suggested ; 'these caps, when made of Swiss muslin and with a full border edged with Valenciennes lace [let us hope some of those Turkish bonds were realised], are most becoming.' These exquisite portraits, however, are as nothing compared with that of the Lady-cook in her bower of a kitchen fitted up in the Swiss style. [It must be premised that this apartment is always upstairs. The underground chamber, which was once the scene of the unholy revels of the professional and her myrmidons, is now a lumber-room, or set apart for the males to stupefy themselves in with their horrid tobacco.] The shelves have a border of fretwork in sycamore above their edges. The window curtains are of Swiss muslin. 'Oval wooden pails, with a board on one side left tall and cut out for a handle,' are recommended, as both useful and artistic, 'and baskets like those carried by the Swiss mountaineers at their backs. A cuckoo clock and a few hooks of chamois-horn carry out the effect. Characteristic ornaments, such as paintings of Swiss scenery and flowers in wooden frames, wood carvings on brackets, wooden bears as match-boxes, wooden screw nutcrackers, should be collected during visits to Switzerland' [for we have plenty of money for tours now we have got rid of the servants]. All this is charming, and reminds us of a favourite chamber of our boyhood in the Coliseum in the Regent's Park ; but the best is still to come. 'A Swiss costume will be found as practically useful as any dress the young cook can wear, and will add a great charm and,

loveliness to the scene.' ['So I should think,' here interposed the old lady of whom we have made mention. 'I wonder what the butcher-boy thought of her in her Swiss costume'!] Again our authoress was equal to the situation; the butcher never sees her; or at least catches only a glimpse of her through the revolving shutter of the front door. This mechanical contrivance comes under the head of 'Tradespeople, Calls, and answering the Bell.' [Our old lady was triumphant about that: 'Who answers the bell, I should like to know?']

The kitchen being above stairs, and that abomination a back door being non-existent, or nailed up, every application is of course made to the front door, and the difficulty is thus met. There are four classes of people who knock at this door. 'The family, tradespeople, visitors, and casuals' [not to mention run-away knocks]. The master and mistress have latch-keys. [It is characteristic that the latter fact is taken for granted]. The rest of the family use a particular knock. 'For several years past,' says our authoress, 'my family have used four single knocks, which is a sign sufficiently unlike other knocks to be recognised immediately.' So we should think: there has been nothing like it since the performance of the Cock Lane Ghost. Then there are the tradespeople, who first call for orders and then with supplies: they are never admitted into the Elysium—some may call it the Asylum—under discussion. The front door is fitted with a turnstile door 'like the birdcage gates of the Zoological Gardens,' which only work one way. This is provided with a turn-table, on which the various desired objects are placed by the tradesmen, through an orifice 'necessarily large enough to admit a leg of mutton.' How this is to be accomplished so that the lady-housekeeper gives her own order, independent of a hireling, without being exposed to the public gaze, is somewhat vaguely explained. For, though ourselves the pink of politeness, we can fancy no spectacle more likely to rivet our attention, as passers-by, than the vision of a lady, in a Swiss or other æsthetic costume, presiding over a buttery hatch of the size of a leg of mutton. Moreover, the calls of visitors seem to be a little glossed over. It must demand considerable mental courage, or great audacity, to tell your friend that you are 'not at home' with your own lips, even if the buttery hatch is kept shut, and you gave him or her the information through the letter-box. On the other hand, if you wish to be at home, it cannot be pleasant for a young lady to acquaint a footman with that fact through that extraordinary leg-of-mutton orifice. We think, since costume is studied, that the door-opener for the day should be attired as a nun appearing at

the *grille*; with perhaps a veil (of Valenciennes) and a neat little wooden cross from Switzerland.

When we visited the kitchen, we omitted to call attention to the scullery; and especially to the sink. This is a spot on which we don't expend much decoration in ordinary houses: but matters are very different when we are our own kitchen maids. 'The sink should be a shallow bath of Marezzo marble, and finely coloured. I should select it of a colour harmonizing with the general style of the kitchen. The best possible sink would be of real marble highly polished, but the cost of this,' we are told, 'would preclude its use in an economical household.' Servants or no servants, we think we could get on without a polished marble sink; but we do not think we could get on without dinner; and this important event is, to say the least of it, slurred over. We admit the merits of the young lady in Swiss costume, surrounded with carved nutcrackers, but how about her cooking? 'Many persons,' our authoress allows, 'dislike to have their cooking done by gas, and it is objectionable for roasting and boiling; still, there are such numerous inventions in roasting and boiling, each more perfect than the rest, that only the embarrassment of selection can cause hesitation in making a choice.' Now this is not practical—indeed, it sounds more like a practical joke. Dear Madam, we must have a kitchen *fire*, and the daughter of the house whose complexion is of least consequence must look after it. 'Joints of meat,' we are told, 'with potatoes and Yorkshire pudding, are as well cooked at the baker's as at home.' A monstrous statement which strikes at the very root of culinary science; and, moreover, who is to take the meat to the baker's and bring it back again? Not the baker, it is certain. Under the head of Marketing we have an alluring picture of one of the fair denizens of this retreat giving her orders at the various shops, and bringing home small parcels—'any parcel, for instance, that is no heavier than a little dog.' But the beef and the potatoes and the Yorkshire pudding, with their artistic cover, may weigh as much as a Newfoundland!

No: the culinary part of the subject is, as we have said, glossed over; and the reason is to be found in other parts of this remarkable volume. Our authoress is æsthetic, cares but little for such sublunary matters as meals; she is probably devoted to old china; and is assuredly addicted to that melancholy performance, 'a little music in the evening,' which shortened the days of a late cabinet minister. There is an observation about the heinousness of permitting people to talk while music is being played in the drawing-room, which arouses our worst suspicions. Who has not made one of an evening party, we do not say with the poet, 'all silent and all

damned,' but all silent, and consigning to eternal perdition in their hearts some indifferent but exacting performer on the piano?

Then again, our authoress rejoices in drawing-room games; 'happy rhymes,' and 'cross questions and crooked answers,' what she calls 'paper games,—capital promoters of laughter, and whetstones to the wit—if one is only clever enough to play at them;' the very things, in fact, which make our Christmas evenings so terrible.

We have no doubt that everything is in a high style of Art in the Elysium that has been pourtrayed for us, but we doubt its comfort, or its attractions for the sterner sex; we don't like that notion of saving money out of the servants for foreign tours. It somehow suggests that the tenants of the Elysium were anxious to get away from it, and as far as possible.

This uncomfortable impression is to be regretted, because in some respects the book is so sensible. It admits the necessity of the male—for window-cleaning purposes: better done, by the by, we are told, 'with old newspapers wetted' than with cloths as usual. It grants that once a week the hateful domestic must be admitted in the form of a char-woman, for general cleaning operations, and for whitening the doorstep. It allows that the washing cannot be done at home. It makes every effort, in short, to convince us that its propositions are reasonable; and to a considerable extent, it succeeds. We have to acknowledge some practical hints that may be useful even in our present Promethean-like condition, with servants preying on our vitals. 'A cold dish-cover,' we are informed, for example, 'will freeze a leg of mutton to the very marrow.' Yet how often is the precaution of warming our dish-covers neglected! On the other hand, we should not be surprised to find the same fault at the Elysium which we have before now discovered to our cost at the tables of china-maniacs; cold plates—because the china is too valuable to be put to the fire. Our author gives some capital advice on the importance of securing food *in its season*, when luxuries which the indolent believe to be beyond their reach are to be procured at a moderate figure. 'Venison is by no means an expensive viand, if the market be watched,' she says. We picture to ourselves the fair inhabitants of the Elysium 'watching the market' for venison, and wish we were as great with the pencil as we are with the pen. 'Gracious!' exclaims our old lady, 'think of venison as an article of economy!' The 'persons represented,' however, in this domestic drama without 'supers,' are not necessarily very poor. Our authoress applies her system to all families whose income does not exceed three figures. If we have 999*l.* a year, and no servants, we may surely 'watch the market for venison.'

One advantage accruing from a house without servants is that the attics are bowers. 'I have known an attic in Baker Street [a house in Baker Street without servants seems to us the triumph of our author's theory] so converted by the invention and taste of a young lady as to live in one's recollection as as pretty a summer room as any country rectory could boast, by being papered with bright flowery paper all over its sloping roof, and its window made cheerful by climbing plants and flowers.' We can hardly conclude our notice of this remarkable volume more agreeably than with that enticing picture. Still, we must not omit the division of time in the Elysium. Our authoress adopts the old lines,

Six hours to work,
To soothing slumber seven,
Ten to the world,
And all to Heaven,—

which, it will be perceived by the mathematical reader, leaves an hour to spare.

Our private impression is that this was set apart, not 'for daily service in the church for those who wish to attend it;' *that* is surely included in the 'all to Heaven'—but for 'watching the market' for venison, or other luxuries more suitable to a cooking stove.

By Prorp.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A JESUITICAL LETTER.

IF Nellie was indifferent as regarded Ralph Pennicuick and his actions, such was by no means the case with him as respected her. It would have astonished her not a little if she could have known the space which she occupied in his thoughts. While her mother had been alive, the two women had been burden enough upon his mind of late ; but strange to say, now one had been removed by death, the survivor weighed upon him even more heavily than the two had done. His animosity towards Mrs. Conway—though he would never have confessed as much even to himself—had greatly mitigated his remorse for the wrong that he had done them. It is a feeling from which no human being, perhaps, is utterly free. The religious persecutor, who burnt women and children alive for the glory of God, could never have done the devil's work in that way so gaily if he had not entertained a private grudge against them as being heretics. Our notions of Right and Wrong, so far as dealing with our fellow-creatures is concerned, are largely guided by our sense of Like and Dislike. It is even more easy to love our enemies than to behave with perfect fairness towards those who, without being our enemies, are what is termed antipathetic.

Fairness of course did not enter into Pennicuick's thoughts; he had made up his mind to fraud from the beginning; but that course had, without doubt, been rendered less difficult to him from the sentiments he had entertained towards Mrs. Conway. He had been of old attracted by her beauty, and she had treated his attentions, as soon as they became intelligible, with indignant scorn; and from that moment his heart had hardened against her. It made no difference to him that she had not told her husband of his traitorous behaviour; to do him justice, he was no coward, and besides he was perfectly aware that she had not spared him for his own sake. For some women it would have been a perilous thing to possess such a secret, and yet to keep on tolerable terms, so far as appearances went, with their tempter. But Mrs. Conway's character was much too pronounced, and her tone of mind alto-

gether too robust, to be open to this danger. And this, strange to say, Pennicuck at once understood, though his false notions of female honour had allowed him to make so grave a mistake in the first instance. Moreover, it was not in her nature to play the hypocrite, and notwithstanding the apprehensions she entertained of her husband's guessing the truth of the matter—a totally groundless fear, by the way, for he was the most unsuspecting of men—her behaviour towards his friend had changed from that hour, and, though it hinted nothing of the hatred with which she regarded him, became austere and chilling. This was the only way the poor woman had of declaring war; she could not appeal to her natural ally her husband; whereas, her enemy did appeal to him; drew him from his allegiance to her, or helped to draw, by widening every little breach between them caused by her unhappy temper; encouraged him in all those paths, to which he was already too prone, that led him away from home; and in the end no doubt contributed to their separation.

Ralph Pennicuck knew that he had done this, but had never felt a pang of remorse in consequence. In his eyes, Mrs. Conway was an ill-conditioned waspish woman, and he sincerely pitied his friend for having married her. The best thing Conway could do, in his opinion, since he had been fool enough to tie such a stone round his neck, was to give her as much line as possible; the rope could not be cut, but it could be elongated. He had advised him to go abroad 'out of reach of Madam's tongue,' but not more strongly (so he flattered himself) than he would have urged the same course on any other man in the like position. But his heart, in truth, had been set hard against her. He never thought of her more directly as respected himself than as a cold-blooded prude, but her contempt for him inspired his actions. The recollection of all this, and the knowledge of her animosity towards him, heightened as it had been by intermediate events, had without doubt gone far to quiet his conscience in his falsehood to his friend—which was after all only a different sort of falsehood (with fraud added) from that which he had originally contemplated—but the love of money had been at the root of the matter; and it remained there still. He did not like Mrs. Conway a bit better because she was dead. He was quite above that weakness which softens some of us towards those with whom we have not 'got on' when they are removed by death; indeed, in this case, his foe had died in a manner studiously devised, as it seemed, for his discomfort. But now that she was gone, he felt that one of his chief springs of evil action was removed; that a flange, as it were, that had helped to keep him on the line of wrong, had given way; and though he must

still go on, that it would now be more difficult for him to do so. For Nellie Conway had given him no cause of offence whatever. He even knew (for he knew everything that concerned himself) that the girl had done her best to mitigate her mother's antipathy towards him, and though the thought of robbing the widow and the orphan had been made almost tolerable to him, now that the question narrowed itself to the orphan alone, the idea of injuring the harmless, helpless girl, the only child of the man that had died for him, was well-nigh insupportable.

But between shrinking from wronging her and rising to the height of righting her at a cost of 20,000*l.* there was a great gulf. Having once reconciled himself to keeping that sum of money to himself, he was not the man to begin arguing so delicate a question of conscience all over again. It had cost him a good deal—all his peace of mind, and half his powers of digestion—to establish the matter to his satisfaction, or partly to his satisfaction, and he was not going to be disturbed by casuistry. Only he did desire, now, much more even than before, to feel less like a villain. Although never liberal in his dealings, he had been a scrupulously honest man all his life, until this great temptation to do evil without risk had been too much for him. No amount, or scarcely any amount, of gain could have induced him to rob another man; for in this case he did not feel that he was doing this; he was only keeping money which, though he had agreed to part with it, had never left his hands, and therefore seemed somehow still to be his own. And it was really so much better, taking the matter all round, that he *should* keep it. What would a girl like Nellie Conway, for example, who had been brought up in a homely and quiet way, do with 20,000*l.*? It would be the ruin of the simplicity of her character, and would mark her as a prey for every fortune-hunter. As to her father's dying wish that it should be so, the case was a precisely parallel one to that of the 'pious founders' of old, who, with the intention of doing good, did from their bequests a great deal of harm instead, and whose *post-mortem* arrangements were therefore very properly set aside by Act of Parliament in favour of some more useful plan. In spite of his determination not to reopen the question, Ralph Pennicwick in fact found himself going over again all the old round of self-extenuation and self-apology, except of course that there was now only Nellie on whom to fix his thoughts.

Raymond had not as yet spoken a word to him about her, but he had an uneasy consciousness that the boy would speak, and it would be therefore well to take precautions. As to making her an heiress at his own expense, and then permitting his son to

marry her, the idea was almost as distasteful to him as that of simple restitution. Ralph Pennicuck not only loved money, but power; especially power over his own flesh and blood: and perhaps in no case—though he had always enjoined on him the propriety of ‘marrying money’—would he have been pleased to see his son independent of himself. He had great confidence in the sense of future advantage, of benefits to come, and very little in the force of natural affection, and he deemed the best way to keep a son under one’s thumb was to keep a tight hand on him *with something in it*. In this, as we know, he utterly misjudged Raymond’s character, but such mistakes are the penalty always paid by egotists, however sagacious. To them the world is peopled by Frankensteins of their own creation, who are necessarily wanting in the attributes which they do not themselves possess.

On the very day of the funeral of Mrs. Conway, Ralph Pennicuck returned to his own rooms in the Albany, and sat down to compose a letter to Nellie. He chose that time, not only because it was the earliest date on which the thing could with propriety be done, and the sooner it was done and off his mind the better, but also because he was safe from interruption from Raymond. The lad had been as usual very dutiful, and was always looking in upon him to enquire after his health, which in truth was far from good; he was willing to stay and dine, or leave his father to himself, just as the latter pleased, and had thus unknowingly often afforded him intense relief. Ralph Pennicuck had hitherto been the most independent of men; he was not indeed particularly ‘full of resources’—which generally implies drawing, painting, playing the flute, making artificial flies, deciphering double acrostics, and other little elegant accomplishments—but he was generally satisfied with his own society and the companionship of a cigar and a French novel; but there were now times when it seemed intolerable to him to be alone. And yet Raymond’s company had been unpleasant to him from the apprehension that he might return to the topic of Nellie Conway. The recency of his own return to England and, later, the catastrophe of Mrs. Conway’s death, had hitherto perhaps preserved him from the discussion of this unpleasant subject, but he had a presentiment that it would come sooner or later, and it was well to take precautions. Under ordinary circumstances, and when no such weight was on his mind as now habitually oppressed it, he would have taken a very short way with both Raymond and the girl: ‘Marry and starve’ would have been his reply to the former, while he would not have scrupled to point out to the latter, that if in becoming his son’s wife she was under the expectation of making

a good match, she was mistaken. But with the consciousness of what he had done as respected her dead father, and of what he was resolved to fail to do as respected herself, he could not take this high hand. He had been a bully and he had of late become a scoundrel; but he could not—at least as yet—brazen out his crime by any species of tyrannical swagger. He had, as we have seen, already astonished Raymond by his unwonted liberality towards the widow and her daughter, and the same tenderness of conscience led him now in the same direction, and even still further, inasmuch as the survivor was not objectionable to him. Only his mind was fixed that she should never marry Raymond.

It was under these circumstances that Ralph Pennicuck composed his letter to her.

‘My dear Miss Nellie,—You will, I am sure, understand that nothing short of serious indisposition prevented my attendance at—’

Here a strange thing happened; the door of the bedroom in which the dead woman had lain up to that very morning opened slowly outward. It was a thing that had happened to him—as it has probably happened to all of us—half a dozen times before. An insecure catch of the lock, a draught, a weakened hinge—any or all of these things might have occasioned it; but the effect upon the witness was very remarkable. His fingers stiffened upon the pen and grew damp and clammy, his brow was bedewed with sweat; his eyes stared at the advancing door with stony horror. This was but for a minute at most: then he rose quickly, walked steadily to the door, closed it, and resumed his seat. His occupation, however, he was unable to resume. His mind was clear as to what he wished to write, but his trembling hand could no longer obey his wishes. He sat feeling his wrist and noting its pulsations by the clock upon the mantelpiece and with an anxious look upon his face. He was no longer a prey to superstitious terror, but thoroughly alarmed upon his own account. Nothing but physical ailment—something seriously wrong in his system—could have caused him, he was well convinced, to have been so weak and foolish. He felt as if he had had a warning—not of the supernatural sort—and it was not the first by many, though he had never before experienced so rude a shock. His sea voyage had been by no means so beneficial as he had promised to himself; he had been nervous and ‘shaky’ all along, and, having no confidence in the chief surgeon, had resorted to a remedy which he knew to be a dangerous one. He turned to it now, though by no means eagerly—as he was aware might be the case some day. He took from his side pocket a silver flask, and poured himself out a little

brandy; 'just a thimbleful,' as he murmured to himself in an apologetic tone. 'I must really see Green about this before it goes any further.'

Then he lit a cigar, and placing his chair so that he faced the bedroom door, continued his letter.

'You will, I am sure, understand that nothing short of serious indisposition prevented my attendance at the funeral of your poor mother. I am deeply grieved not to have been able to pay her that last sad tribute of respect; but, to say truth, I could not trust myself to do so. My health, already broken down by recent events, has altogether given way beneath this last catastrophe.'

Here he paused, pen in hand, and then wrote, with many alterations and erasures: 'There are no more friendships for me, to be called such; and when I have seen Raymond suitably married, I feel that then there will be little else for me to live for.' The word 'suitably' had been selected with especial care. He gave an approving nod as he wrote it down. 'One satisfaction, however, I have promised myself; namely, to make sure that she who was nearest and dearest to my departed friend shall be placed above all carking care. You must permit me, dear Miss Nellie, for his sake [here his hand shook so that the words were hardly decipherable: but that was of small consequence, as the note was but a rough copy], to settle on you, for life, the sum of four hundred pounds a year. The first quarter of this, as you may be in present need of funds, I shall instruct Mr. Tatham, my solicitor, to pay over to you at once.' At first he intended to end here; but on perusing the composition, it struck him that the allusion to Raymond's future prospects as respected matrimony had hardly sufficient directness. 'I need not say how pleased I shall always be to hear of your well-being, and especially to welcome, in due time, the man who may have the good fortune to win your heart, and supply to you the place of those whose loss now doubtless appears irreparable.

'Yours always faithfully,

'RALPH PENNICUICK.'

It was a letter by no means characteristic of the writer, and had consequently cost him infinite pains. But upon the whole he was well satisfied with it. It was liberal (or at least the recipient must needs think so); it was sympathetic, as he flattered himself; and, above all, it expressed his intentions as to Raymond without the possibility of a mistake. It did flash across him for a moment that, if his offer was accepted, the girl might take his money and his son too, who, with that three hundred a year of his own, of the

possession of which he was yet in ignorance, would then have sufficient for an independent subsistence. But there would be an opportunity of guarding against that in the deed of settlement. It would, at all events, be doing more harm than good to allude at present to a contingency which the letter itself placed, by implication, out of the question.

It was some hours before the post went out to Richmond, but Ralph Pennicuick felt that the sooner it was sent the better; and wishing, for certain reasons of his own, that it should not pass through Mr. Hatton's hands, he went out and posted it himself at once.

CHAPTER XXX.

A DELICATE TOPIC.

IF when we lose a limb the pain were done with, so much importance would not be attached to that misfortune; but, as everybody knows who is acquainted with one who has thus suffered, there are periods when the patient seems to undergo the agony afresh, besides those ordinary and frequent occasions when, through accident, the wounded man receives a blow, and all the torments of the original catastrophe are renewed again. And thus it is with a wounded conscience. We may have taken the strongest measures with it; the 'actual cautery,' as it were, may have been applied, and we may flatter ourselves that, although a certain inconvenience—a sense of being no longer whole—may remain with us, the mischief has found its limits; that we shall not again be troubled by those remorseful pangs which are felt at first. But, alas, we find that no such comfort is vouchsafed us: the wound is there, and not until we have received so many such that we are morally head to foot a festering sore, do we lose the sense of its individual pain.

Ralph Pennicuick was what is called in pulpit phrase 'a man of sin' in many ways; but the course which he had adopted and was still pursuing with respect to his dead friend was the one dishonest action of his life; nor could he hope, by any subsequent behaviour, to become callous to it. He had flattered himself that when he had once made up his mind to neglect to fulfil his bargain with Conway, the affair would cease to give him trouble; the feverish days and wakeful nights that had befallen him had long proved that hope fallacious, and now he found that everything which had reference to his delinquency—however remote—was an instrument, not, indeed, of punishment, for punishment suggests expiation, but of retribution, and remorse, and woe. Even the

narratives he had been compelled to give of Conway's death, the feelings he had been forced to affect concerning it, the reasons for this and that, in connection with it, he had been obliged to invent, had been gall and wormwood to him; but these references to the wronged dead were painless compared with the direct communications it had been necessary to have with the wronged living. The very idea of them had, as we have seen, been so hateful to him, that at some risk of involving nearer relations between Nellie and his son than already existed, he had sent Raymond as his envoy to Richmond; in spite of which precaution, the widow had visited him in person, discomfited him to the last degree with her suspicions and accusations, and eventually so died as to seem to lay her very death at his door. Then, in self-defence, he had had to write to Nellie about the inquest, a task which cost him not a little; and after all these things he had suffered a recurrence of his original feelings of remorse and shame. And now, when he had posted that second letter to the girl, which had seemed such a masterpiece of policy, and so thoroughly adapted for the main purpose he had now in view (and which, indeed, threatened to become the main purpose of his life), namely, that of quieting his own mind by a judicious expenditure of money on Nellie, *now*, to his great disappointment and almost to his indignation, the cries of his half-stifled conscience broke forth afresh.

As he sat in his lonely room waiting for Raymond's return from the funeral, he felt so far from satisfied with himself that he had to debate the question of his own scoundrelship all over again, as though it had not already been settled half-a-dozen times in his favour. It seemed that there must be always a right of appeal for that unhappy case, however he might get it arranged or compromised in the courts below. Four hundred a year, there was no doubt, was an income sufficient for any young lady, and when, as in this instance, she had been accustomed to economical ways, it was something more than sufficient, it was handsome. But it was not the income derivable from 20,000*l.*, except at two per cent.; and it also suggested no hint of its being the interest of any such sum. Again, it was doubtless better for the girl that she should be thus provided for, and, while placed in comfort and even affluence, should be at the same time removed from the arts of Irish and other adventurers. But the question that would still intrude itself upon Ralph Pennicuick's mind, was what Arthur Conway had thought upon that matter when lying between life and death in Dhulong prison; he had probably been as good a judge of what would conduce to his daughter's happiness as a stranger; but at all events, and however that might be, it was certain that in return,

for a very material value received, he had imposed certain conditions on his seeming friend which that gentleman had wilfully declined to fulfil, and *was still declining*. It was there, in the tail of the thing, that the sting lay. It was not as if he had robbed a man, and had done with it; robbery had become, as it were, his profession; it sometimes entailed the most shocking responsibilities upon him—such as the death of a fellow-creature, since certainly but for his behaviour Mrs. Conway would not have died; but he must needs follow it for all that; it was a business from which he could not retire; he was now robbing an orphan girl.

There was another thing that troubled Pennicuick immensely, though he fought against it with all his weakened powers. He had had from the first a consciousness that Arthur Conway was cognisant of what he was doing, and was in a manner present with him during all his planning and scheming to reconcile his conscience with himself and make all things pleasant and comfortable; and since the widow's death this conviction had grown upon him. Moreover, he now fancied them *both* possessed of his shameful secret, and regarding him with accusing eyes. This monstrous idea was one very inconsonant with his nature, and which his intelligence exceedingly resented; it got the mastery over him only in moments of physical weakness, and never after a good meal or a glass of wine; but it always seemed on the watch to possess his mind. It was not substantive at present; he never actually seemed to see these phantoms of his brain, but he had a secret fear lest he should see them, and this (among other things) made his own society distasteful to him. If the companionship of others was not absolutely a comfort to him, he felt it to be a sort of safeguard.

It was with genuine satisfaction therefore that Ralph Pennicuick received his son's visits, and never more so than on the afternoon of Mrs. Conway's funeral, when he had made provision in his note to Nellie against all consequences, in case the topic which he had always apprehended should be started from Raymond's lips. He felt sure that Raymond would come, and he did so. He was in deep black of course; his face was pale; his eyes looked as if he had been weeping. It was natural enough, and his father had expected it, for he knew the lad to be of a sentimental nature; 'soft' like his mother before him; and yet he resented these evidences of emotion. He felt it as a reproach to himself that his son should be so tender-hearted towards these Conways, though it was his own wish to affect to be so: and he also suspected that the tenderness had something to do with his liking for Nellie.

'Well, my lad, you must be glad it is over. It must have been a sad morning's work.' He purposely spoke curtly to let Raymond know that he did not wish to touch upon the subject more than was necessary.

'Yes, sir; it was very sad.'

'You told her, of course—I mean Nellie—how deeply I felt for her, and how I regretted my enforced absence from the funeral.'

'I had no speech with her at all, sir; she was not in a state to be spoken to.'

'Ah, I dare say; poor girl! Well, well, these are things that happen to all of us. All we can do is to make it as easy as we can for her. Those Wardlaws fortunately seem to have taken a fancy to her.'

'Yes; they are kindness itself. Mrs. Wardlaw told me they are going to take her away to the seaside, somewhere, as soon as possible.'

'Quite right to remove her from all painful associations. The very thing I should have advised myself. We must take care, however, to save her from all sense of obligation.'

'I think that can hardly be, sir; indeed, I think it is a comfort to her to feel indebted to such good friends.'

'In a sentimental point of view, no doubt; but she would not like them to pay money for her.'

'They are not people to think of that,' said Raymond confidently.

'Very likely not; I dare say they are free enough with their money; persons of their class often are; but I confess, from what I have seen of them, they seem rather a vulgar couple. At all events, I have taken measures to place her upon a proper footing with them.'

'I hope you have not written to Mr. Wardlaw,' said Raymond, flushing up, 'to offer—'

'Of course not. I have nothing to do with Mr. Wardlaw. I have written to Nellie herself. She is a sensible girl and will, I am sure, understand her own position. I am going to allow her 400*l.* a year for life; that will be an ample provision for her wants, while at the same time it will not attract the greed of adventurers. If she marries suitably—' here Ralph Pennicuck rose and put the clock straight upon the mantelpiece, to avoid meeting his son's eyes—'I propose in addition to settle a lump sum upon herself and children.'

'I have a few words
said Raymond as

my father, upon that subject,
an impulse of desperation.

I expressed them in a letter to you I sent to China, but which you have not as yet received.'

'About a settlement on Nellie Conway,' returned the other, with affected astonishment; 'how could that possibly have happened?'

'No, sir, not about the settlement, but about Nellie herself. I—that is she——'

'Now, I hope you are not going to make a fool of yourself, my lad,' interrupted the other sharply. 'I am not in a state of health to endure worry.'

'I am very sorry to give you any annoyance, sir, but this is a matter upon which some time or another I must speak, and if I were silent now you might afterwards accuse me, with good reason, of duplicity. From my childhood upwards I have loved no human being as I have loved Nellie Conway——'

'You are certainly candid,' put in Ralph Pennicuck; 'you make no exception, then, even of your father.'

'Indeed, sir, I have always loved you also and striven to obey you in all things; but this is a love of another kind, a boy's love for a girl you may say, but it has passed through that phase, and is now a deep-seated passion, the one hope of my life.' Raymond paused, from sheer agitation, for he was deeply moved; his father, who had produced a penknife, and had begun deliberately to pare his nails, regarded him with an amused air.

'This is curious, my dear Raymond, but it is not unparalleled, though I confess I have never experienced anything of the same kind myself. Perhaps I was not quite so particular in the objects of my attachments; before I was your age I had half-a-dozen of them.'

'I have never loved but one woman,' returned the young man gravely.

'Dear me! and you are almost one-and-twenty! The gentle passion, however, does sometimes delay to seize a man till late in life; then, as with the measles, it is all the more dangerous; at sixty, my dear Raymond, you will be like the Grand Turk.'

'I beseech you, sir, not to treat what I am about to say to you as a jest,' answered the young man earnestly. 'I know that my appeal is distasteful to you; it grieves me more than I can express to urge it under the present circumstances; I entreat you, however, to bear with me. It is the first time, I think, that I have ever had the misfortune to act counter to your wishes.'

'Let us say to *propose* to act counter to them,' observed the other quietly.

'Indeed, sir, there are some matters which override all the

ordinary rules and duties of life,' replied Raymond quickly. 'My heart is so bound up in this one that I cannot answer for my own fealty to you. We are told to leave father and mother to cleave to her that is our wife—'

'You don't mean to say you have dared to marry this girl!' cried Ralph Pennicuick, starting up in fury.

'No, sir; I have not married her.' For the moment he wished he had, since such a possibility had crossed his father's mind; he would now have known the worst that could be done with him; and it could be no worse—or so it seemed to him—than being denied his suit.

'It is lucky for you, sir,' answered the other menacingly, but not without a sigh of relief. 'You would have been married over a broomstick, since that is how beggars wed. I shall now take care, in making arrangements for this young woman's subsistence, that no misfortune shall happen to her such as you have had in contemplation.'

'This is the penalty of frankness, then!' observed Raymond bitterly.

'It will be the penalty of filial disobedience, sir,' answered the other curtly. 'I stand aghast at your audacity, but not more so than at the craft and cunning that have been disclosed in this girl so early. She has been much mistaken, however, in her calculations.'

'You misjudge her altogether, father,' said Raymond, interrupting in his turn, but speaking with great gravity and deliberation. 'Craft and cunning are unknown to her. She does not harbour a selfish thought. She is utterly ignorant of my appeal to you.'

'And also of your devotion to her, no doubt,' observed the other cynically.

'She knows I love her. How could she help knowing it, when I have been her companion for years? Nor do I deny that my love is returned, though I have not her permission to affirm it.'

This piece of delicacy was, unfortunately for his own views, quite lost upon the elder gentleman. If he had understood what Raymond literally meant, that Nellie had forbidden him to use her as an ally in pleading with his father, he might have made some capital out of it; but he set down this statement as merely another specimen of the young fellow's 'maundering' and 'softness' which was to be met with contemptuous indifference like all the rest of it. Still his rôle was to be good-natured as well as firm.

'My good sir, this whole love affair of yours is a chimera,' exclaimed he, 'a mere monster of your amorous imagination. It

can no more take a solid practical shape than yonder clouds over Piccadilly. It will presently dissolve—perhaps with a tear or two on her side—and leave the future all the clearer for both of you. There is no sort of reality about it.’

‘I can understand your saying that, father, if I were asking you for any considerable allowance to support us,’ pleaded Raymond. ‘I don’t think I have ever shown myself greedy in that way, or—or—extravagant as some young fellows are. I have heard you say as much yourself. And I don’t wish you to trench upon your own income, so as to be a burden to you in any way. I thought if you would add another 200*l.* to my own allowance—’

‘Not a shilling, not a penny,’ interrupted the other impatiently. ‘You should have no allowance from me at all. And I need not add, that this girl would have none either. What you are urging me to do, in fact, is to hold my hand as respects herself. You are seeking to impoverish the very being to whom you pretend to be attached. As to your own moderate way of living, I don’t wish to detract from its merits; it does you credit; but, on the other hand, you would be a fool to be extravagant. If you raised money, it would be at a ruinous interest, for you well know, and the Jews know, that I am not one to be crossed. Then as to my not making you a large allowance, I am not in the position to do so.’

‘I have never hinted that you should do so, sir,’ said Raymond gloomily. He was very unwilling that his father should enter upon this topic, lest he should be obliged to disbelieve him. He could not forget that 20,000*l.* of which Mr. Tatham the lawyer had informed him when he had thought that Raymond had come into his kingdom; any plea of poverty put forward by his father must needs, he was therefore aware, be a pretence. It is impossible, however, for a mean man to be otherwise than secretive. When pushed with relation to pecuniary affairs, he resorts to the expedient of the cuttle-fish; he darkens the whole matter; and when it comes to giving reasons for his economies, he will lie. And thus it happened with Ralph Pennicwick; only, instead of being pushed, he was volunteering falsehood.

‘You may, nevertheless, Raymond, have expected more,’ continued the other. ‘You may have formed an exaggerated view of my fortune. It amounts to no great sum, as I have more than once endeavoured to point out to you, and there are many demands upon it of which you know nothing. At the same time, it is not so despicable that you should risk losing it, by opposing yourself to my wishes.’

‘Pray cease to threaten me, sir,’ cried Raymond suddenly; ‘I cannot bear it.’

This was not spoken in a pleading voice: the son’s tone had quite as much menace in it as that of the father: the word was I ‘can’ not, but the meaning was I ‘will’ not. Ralph Pennicwick fully understood this. His face grew set, and hard; he pressed his thin lips tightly together, and his eyes shot a glance like flame.

‘By heaven, young man, you are independent enough!’ he began angrily; then he suddenly recollected that he *was* independent, though he did not know it; that in a few weeks he would have three hundred a year with which to do as he pleased. If he showed this audacity when for all he knew he was a pauper, how would he behave when he should be no longer indebted to another for supplies! Ralph regretted for the first time that he had hitherto ‘kept his son so short,’ since his habits of economy would now render him the more independent of him.

‘By heaven, young man, you are independent enough!—but it is ungenerous of you thus to take advantage of a father’s affection. You know that I could never leave you to starve; but that should hardly have encouraged you to ask what by your own confession you knew would be distasteful to me, and was indeed as improper as it was impracticable.’

‘Improper, sir? What is there improper in my attachment to the daughter of your friend? If he is cognisant of the request I make—if the dead can know what is affecting their nearest and dearest——’

‘Be silent, sir,’ cried Ralph shrilly, while a shudder passed over his hard face, like a shadow blown about a crag. ‘I will not be dictated to, or taught my duty by a boy. I cannot believe that such wilful disobedience can be the product of your own nature. I believe that this girl is egging you on. I will write to her in plain terms, so that at least she shall not ruin both herself and you with her eyes shut.’

‘I entreat you, I beseech you, sir, not to do that,’ exclaimed Raymond passionately. ‘Let it be sufficient that I have failed to move you; that the one favour I have asked of you during my whole life has been refused.’

‘If I remain silent,’ said Ralph, ‘you on your part must pledge yourself not to blast this young woman’s prospects by urging her to act in opposition to my will.’

‘I promise that, sir,’ said Raymond gloomily.

‘Very good; your word I know is to be depended upon. Now, if you will take my advice, you will give yourself a holiday, and mix a little more in the world of pleasure than, it seems, you have

of late been doing. If you want money for a fling—fifty pounds or so —

‘I want no money, sir, thank you.’

‘Well, well, if you do, apply to me; what is mine is yours, my lad. I have no other aim in life than to see you happy—that is, in a reasonable way; mingling with your *equals*, and remaining in that sphere to which you naturally belong. You will thank me some day for what you now consider to be my cruelty. I would say, Stay to dine with me, but this talk has upset me. Go to the opera to-night; see Léonie in the ballet: they tell me she’s charming.’

And so father and son took leave of one another.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

WHEN we speak of natural beauty, it is generally the face which we have in our eye or in our mind’s eye: it is only a few enthusiasts who rave about a woman’s ears or the nape of her neck; we even say ‘the face of nature’ when extolling the charms of a landscape. But in England, at least, there is one exception to this general rule, namely the Isle of Wight. In that case our admiration is always reserved for the ‘back of the island.’ The few miles of road that lie between Blackgang and Sandown Bay form a sort of marine Fairyland. Its loveliness is undeniable, but it is Lilliputian. The romances which are enacted there lie in a nutshell, but they are very numerous. It is sometimes called the Garden of England, but if so it is the back garden—as immortalised in the lives of Vilikins and his Dinah: a charming plot of ground, removed from the madding crowd, and open only to the sea and sky, but of very limited extent. Within this enchanted area lies Sandybeach. I suppose more happy brides have dated their first letters to the objects of their eternal school friendships from Sandybeach than from any place of ten times its size within Her Majesty’s dominions. Cupid hovers everywhere, over the level sands, over the sparkling sea, over the wooded cliffs, as though he were—the reverse, some cynics whisper, of his usual character—a gull. At all seasons his victims are seen arm-in-arm, or hand-in-hand, or even still more tenderly connected, parading the shore, or strolling through the pocket wilderness of the Undercliff. Life is an idyll in this exquisite village, and endures for a month exactly. I know an old gentleman who has been three times a Benedict, who has always spent his honeymoons in this sweet spot, and still cordially

recommends it to friends about to marry. It is also by reason of its quiet and seclusion frequented by the afflicted in mind. So soon as her gentle guest began to gather strength after the double blow that cruel fate had dealt her, Mrs. Wardlaw said to her husband, 'John, we must take Nellie to Sandybeach. And they took her

The poor girl did not herself care where she went; it seemed to her that all places were alike now—all darkened by the shadow of death and environed by the waters of bitterness; but the sunshine and the sea had balm in them. In a few days that first oppression of grief which seems almost to threaten physical suffocation, as well as to sink the heart down to bottomless depths, was mitigated. The clouds lifted a little from her mental view, and through the misty grey of life shone here and there a speck of blue.

Ralph Pennicuick's letter, strange to say, had done her good. It had roused her from the lethargy of grief, by compelling a reply to him, and at the same time had given her a rough reminder of the immediate necessity for exertion. She positively declined his offer of pecuniary aid. She had no doubt of the propriety of that course of action, but perhaps she would have been puzzled to account for all the causes that led her to adopt it. His proposal was kind—if there was some lack of kindness in the terms in which it was conveyed—and certainly liberal; she acknowledged that very readily; she had certainly no claim upon Mr. Pennicuick's purse, and he had opened it freely, but, somehow, she felt, even if she were ailing in health, and unfit to gain her own living, that she could never have touched the contents of it. He had been her father's friend, it was true; and his present generosity would seem to prove that that friendship had been genuine: yet, somehow, it failed to do so. So far from accepting the gift for her father's sake, her very love for her father would have urged her to decline it, even had there not been more cogent reasons for her refusal. Her mother's dislike to Ralph Pennicuick was a still more unsurmountable barrier. The bounty her mother had refused she for her part could certainly not have accepted in any case. This consideration was of course final and sufficient for her: but she also felt a secret disinclination to become the pensioner of Raymond's father. It behoved her in all things to be independent, but above all things to be independent of any bond with Raymond or Raymond's belongings. It made no difference that certain phrases in the elder Pennicuick's letter had their full significance for her: that she quite perceived that his offer covered a tacit understanding that his son and she should be no more than friends; the

words, as she read them, had called up a blush of indignation into her cheeks, as well as innocent shame. But she was not going to be bribed into discarding Raymond, though she was quite resolved not to permit him to become her suitor. Perhaps she experienced a little satisfaction in the thought that her rejection of Ralph Pennicwick's bounty would give him some alarm upon his son's account though there would be no cause for it. And yet his letter had not wholly failed in its intention. She had been resolved before that she would never disclose her tenderness for Raymond, however persevering might be his importunity, but now she was doubly sure of herself; for that her weakness in this respect would be a cause of quarrel between his father and himself was now made known to her for certain.

She had taken her time—an interval of at least two days—in writing her reply to Ralph Pennicwick; a circumstance that had given him great disquietude, for he had at once pictured her to himself as communicating his offer to Raymond and consulting with him upon its acceptance, or perhaps even arranging with him some common plan of action. Her reason for the delay, however, was simply that her would-be benefactor should understand that her rejection of his offer was deliberate, and therefore final. She thanked him, of course, but without effusion; nor did she hint at any of the reasons which, in truth, actuated her conduct, with the exception of her wish for independence. 'I feel,' she wrote, 'that there is now no happiness for me but in work; and for that I must have the incentive of necessity.'

She did not consult with either her host or hostess, but told them all about it when she had settled the matter.

'Well, my dear, I think you have been a little too sensitive,' said Mrs. Wardlaw (who, however, had not seen Mr. Pennicwick's letter). 'The man is rolling in wealth, and keeps his only son as short as though he had a dozen of them. What could he do better with his hoarded money than give you some of it? He evidently thinks you have some claim——'

'Nay,' interrupted Nellie, 'that is not so. I have no claim whatever; and indeed he expressly stated so on another occasion' (she was alluding to that of the inquest). 'I think you are scarcely just to him.'

'Well, you know, my dear, I hate him,' said Mrs. Wardlaw frankly. 'I think him a selfish, bad man. His treatment of his son is alone a proof of it, if there were no other. When people are rich and mean, it is quite right to get everything out of them we can. It is like so much saved out of a fire.'

‘But I should not like to take that sort of salvage,’ said Nellie, smiling.

‘Well, perhaps not, though I should like to see it taken. But this case is different. If conscience induces such a man in any one thing to act handsomely and honourably, I think it is your duty—your moral duty—to let him do it. It will probably be his last endeavour to perform a good action of any kind.’

‘I don’t see how his conscience can have anything to do with it, my dear Mrs. Wardlaw. He is simply moved by a kind impulse, though he does not express it, perhaps, in the most gracious manner.’

‘How should he?’ returned Mrs. Wardlaw. ‘He does not know how, because this is his first attempt. However, as you have said “No,” so let it be. Fortunately we are not dependent on him, my darling.’

She stooped down and gave Nellie, who was at her easel, a hearty kiss. The use of the word ‘we’ was very delicate; it signified that the girl was as a daughter of their own, and as such entitled to her share of their prosperity. Nellie understood it thoroughly, but, except for the tender tones of her reply, ignored it.

‘Yes, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, I feel that I do not need much help. I have your love and sympathy, without which I should be poor indeed; and with those allies I feel myself strong enough, thank heaven, to do my own work in the world, and in time, I hope, to earn my own living. What do you think of my little sketch here? It is very slight, but audaciously ambitious. I mean it for Ophelia.’

‘I don’t know the young lady,’ replied Mrs. Wardlaw, putting up her glasses, ‘and therefore can’t speak as to her likeness. She’s certainly very pretty, but seems to have rather a wild look about the eyes.’

Mrs. Wardlaw was certainly not a connoisseur in pictures; and even her husband could be scarcely said to be an art-critic, though he had a certain rough-and-ready estimate of the merits of a work which was not without its value. Nellie had had but little teaching, and knew how much she stood in need of it; but for the present Sandybeach would at least afford her objects for study, and afterwards she would place herself under professional guidance; at the lowest the place would give her occupation, which she felt to be essential to her.

They took rooms at a pleasant hotel on the very margin of the shore, and at first lived a very secluded life. Nellie and her hostess were all day in the open air; the former sketching, the

latter knitting, or intent upon a page of some novel procured from the little circulating library in the place; I say 'a page,' because she seldom went beyond it; for literature had so immediately soothing an effect upon Mrs. Wardlaw, that she dropped to sleep under its influence at once. Then Nellie's pencil would drop too, and her eyes rest upon the far-stretching solitude of the sea, in melancholy thought, chiefly upon her dead father. The sea had always separated them, and the sight of it perhaps suggested their eternal separation now. She had not set eyes on him since she had been a child, yet so long as he had been in the world, although so far removed, he had seemed near to her. The consciousness that his loving heart was beating in unison with her own, though ever so far away, had annihilated distance; but now all was distance, solitary space, infinity. The sense of loneliness seemed almost more than she could bear. Why should she think of working? What good would it do, even if she succeeded in her works, beyond keeping her alive? And what was there left to live for? She was well in health, she had felt herself getting better and stronger ever since her removal from Richmond; but she almost regretted it. She believed that she would some day meet her father in heaven; oh, would that it could be soon! Her friends were kind to her, beyond all expectation or her own desert, but they could never fill the void around her. She was alone, and must needs remain alone, till her dying day.

One afternoon Mrs. Wardlaw was indisposed—had a headache which the sunshine would only aggravate—and as she would not bear of Nellie remaining within-doors for her sake, the girl went out alone.

Mr. Wardlaw was in London, to which he paid pretty frequent visits, the picturesque not having a continuous attraction for him. Nellie took her sketch-book and sauntered across the sands to her favourite bay. It was a less retired one than many others, and therefore—though it seems a paradox—was always more deserted; the happy pairs who formed the majority of the visitors to Sandy-beach affecting the more secluded coves and dells. The day was lovely, with a fresh wind that drove the shadows across the sea, but was hardly felt in the sheltered spot which Nellie had selected for herself. She took her seat upon a rock with her little box of water-colours beside her, intending to have a long afternoon's work. But as usual, when alone, under similar circumstances, she fell a-thinking. Only—what was most unusual—her thoughts on this occasion escaped from her control. Instead of dwelling upon the dear ones she had lost, or facing the difficulties of her future, they played truant and took holiday. Who is there of us

who, at times, has not ventured to picture to himself the Unobtainable; to pourtray the happiness which he knows can never befall him, and which in his more collected moments he resolutely ignores? It is a foolish indulgence, and brings with it certain punishment; for though we know all along we are but dreaming, the life to which we wake is all the sadder for it. Indeed, this is one of the few weaknesses which bitter experience compels us to forego; to contemplate the *Might-be* is bad enough, but endurable because of the bare possibility of its being realised; but to think on the *Might-have-been*, the *Irrevocable*, the *Impossible*, is too severe an ordeal even for the best disciplined mind.

Nellie's errant thoughts had strayed to Raymond. He had written to her once since her mother's funeral; a kind, but undeemonstrative letter, in her reply to which she had informed him of her approaching departure for Sandybeach; but he had not come down to Richmond to see her. She understood both his reticence and his absence—she would have done so, even if she had not received his father's communication—and she had persuaded herself that all was lost. If he would remain silent and absent long enough, her image would gradually fade from his honest heart and be replaced by some worthier object: it was in process of fading now, no doubt; the knowledge of Mr. Pennicuick's aversion to his suit, communicated to him long before the present date, and probably with great force and directness, must needs have had its effect. Raymond must have given up all thoughts of her—as a lover—as she herself had bade him do. There could be no great harm, then, in letting her mind dwell upon him, since the punishment of her folly would be all her own; it would be severe, she knew—no vague regrets, but an exceeding bitter pain; but the temptation had come suddenly upon her, and she could not resist it. She called to mind the happy years of childhood they had spent together, more harmoniously than brother with sister: they had had no quarrels, for he had always been to her as knight to lady, a gentle yet gallant guardian and champion of her right. And in boyhood he had been the same, though now and then, something that had dropped from her mother's lips, or Mr. Pennicuick's, had suggested to her that they were not upon terms of perfect equality; that he would be rich and she would be poor. Then Mr. Pennicuick had made long absences, and Raymond and herself had been thrown more and more together, and these suggestions had ceased (her mother perhaps had had her own reasons for not recurring to them), and love had grown up between them before they were aware. As in childhood so in manhood, Raymond had ever shown himself unselfish, generous, and devoted to her; and what was

still rarer, young as he was, he had won her respect from his behaviour to others. Her mother had been very fond of him, in spite of his dutifulness towards the father she had hated, and which had forbidden him to listen to her, even when eloquent on his own wrongs. Mrs. Wardlaw would have loved him like a son, if she had not stood in just a little fear of him; she had once advised him to take a high hand in certain dealings with his father—respecting pecuniary matters—and had been rebuked for her interference. Nellie was aware of the total want of sympathy between the elder and younger Pennicuick, and admired the latter beyond measure for his patience and filial submission. She felt that the relation which in her own case had been the chief happiness of her life, was in his a sore and grievous trial. Altogether this young fellow was her ideal of what a man should be; and—and—he could never be hers, but only one to be admired and worshipped a long way off, or, if he came near, to be repressed and put aside. Only, in her thought, to-day, he had not been put aside, but brought very, very near to her, as he had been, in spite of herself, when the tidings of his father's death had come, and he had seemed to be his own master, to wed with whom he would. Oh, if only that might have been, she would not now have been alone in the world, without hope, or ambition, or a future—to be called such. Her hope would have been that she would never lose his love, her ambition to be worthy of retaining it, her Future one clear blue, or if clouded, only as the heavens above her, with such hurrying clouds as passed and left her sky the purer. She was dreaming thus, when a shadow from no cloud fell on the sand before her, and looking up with a quick start of alarm, she beheld the object of her thoughts, Raymond Pennicuick himself.

CHAPTER XXXII.

REJECTED.

IF in the long picture gallery of Hallington Manor, the ancestral home of Ralph Pennicuick, but into which he never willingly set foot, Nellie had been contemplating some full-length portrait of Raymond, and had seen it suddenly slip out of its frame, she could have been hardly more astonished than at his appearance before her now in flesh and blood—like an illustration to the biography she had been compiling of herself. If he had been his own ghost, she could never have stared at him with more tremulous affright.

‘I am afraid I have alarmed you, Nellie,’ said he gently. ‘U

ought to have remembered that the sand gives no warning of one's approach, though it is such a tell-tale when we have passed by.'

'But it was so unexpected, Raymond.'

'Why should it be, Nellie?' The hand she had held out to him he retained for a little, and then relinquished with a pressure that he had of late omitted to use. 'It was surely only natural that I should come to see you as soon as circumstances admitted of it. I called at the hotel, and Mrs. Wardlaw told me where to find you—you are not sorry to see me, are you?'

'Indeed I am not, Raymond.' What were the 'circumstances,' she wondered, to which he alluded? Why had he come down now, and not before? Why did he press her hand with such tender meaning? Why did he look at her so lovingly as he had not ventured to do since their talk in that Richmond garden? Was it possible, after all, that he had gained permission to speak to her—as he had been speaking to her in her day-dream five minutes ago? If he had not, he was very cruel, and yet—

'You are looking better for the Sandybeach air, dear Nellie, I am delighted to see. You have got back your own sweet roses.'

'I am very well,' answered she quickly; 'it is a very healthy place. How is Mr. Pennicuck?'

Raymond's face grew dark; she knew at once that it was not by his father's leave that he had come down to see her; she even suspected there had been a quarrel between them.

'My father is much the same,' he answered. 'Strangely altered from the man he was before he last left England, but the same as he has been since his return. Dr. Green does not detect anything organically wrong; but there is something seriously amiss with him. It is more difficult than ever,' he added, after a pause, 'to overcome his prejudices or preconceived opinions upon any subject.'

'That is only to be expected, Raymond,' answered Nellie gently.

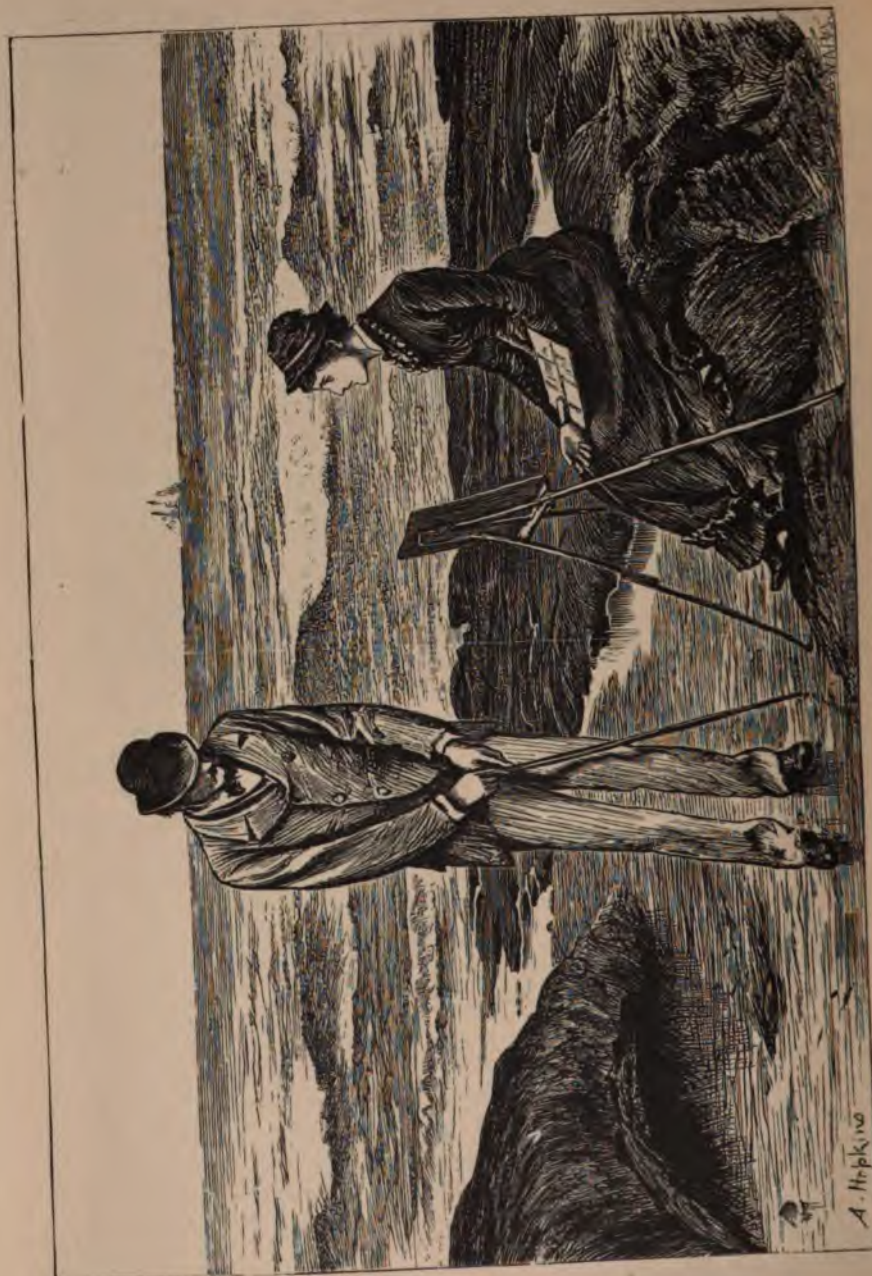
'Yes, but there is a limit to the forbearance due to an invalid, even when he is one's father: that is to say, our duty to him must not override considerations that affect the happiness of others as well as our own.'

Nellie bowed her head; she knew of course to what he was alluding, but she would give him no encouragement to pursue the topic.

'Perhaps I had no right to say "of others,"' continued he, after a pause of expectation, 'even when speaking to you alone?'

'I think you have no right to talk at all to me upon the





A. Hopkins

THE AND RAYMOND

subject—if it be the one which we agreed together should for the future be a sealed one between us.’

‘Except under certain contingencies,’ he put in hastily.

‘There was one, and only one, Raymond, and you have just informed me that that has not taken place. You are breaking your plighted word in reopening any discussion concerning—’

‘One moment, Nellie,’ interrupted the young man passionately. ‘You must have patience with me, and hear me and my cause before dismissing it—and me—for ever. I have not broken faith, as you will acknowledge, in thus addressing you again, in thus, if you will have it so, importuning you again. I am sorry to distress you, I would give my life to save you pain—but then I am pleading for more than life. Moreover, I have an excuse; I am in a different position from that I occupied upon the last occasion when I dared to say, “I love you, dearest.”’

‘In a better one then, I hope—that is, for your sake,’ she added hastily.

‘I thought you would have hoped it for both our sakes,’ replied he. He had no selfish motive in thus speaking, no desire to make her commit herself, to acknowledge her love for him, before he had shown that their union was practicable. He spoke only out of his heart’s abundance; but directly the words had passed his lips he perceived that such an interpretation was possible. ‘I am not come to trouble you, Nellie,’ he went on earnestly; ‘but only to say a few words on—business. My father wrote to you some weeks ago, I think.’

‘Yes, he did. He was good enough to renew the same offer to myself that he made through you to my poor mother. An allowance of 400*l.* a year. It was very handsome of him.’

Raymond shook his head.

‘Well, so I thought, at all events, and I think so now. But I refused it. I am sure you think that I did right.’

‘I am not sure I do,’ said Raymond thoughtfully. ‘May I ask if that offer was made without conditions?’

Nellie hesitated; the conditions had been only implied.

‘There was no condition stated,’ she answered after a little pause.

‘Then you ought to have taken the allowance, Nellie. My father would never have felt it; it would have been a mere flea-bite. He is a much richer man than you or I ever imagined him to be.’

‘I have never given my attention to the extent of Mr. Pennicuck’s fortune.’

‘I don’t suppose you have, Nellie,’ answered the young man

gravely; 'and what appears to some people curious is that *I* had not considered the matter myself. Only when—when that false tidings first came over from China, my father's lawyer, Mr. Tatham, had occasion to make certain disclosures to me. If matters had turned out as then seemed certain, I should (he told me) be a very rich man. Four hundred a year out of my income would certainly not have hurt me.'

'That makes no difference as to my case,' observed Nellie, wondering whither all this should tend.

'Perhaps not; and to mine only indirectly; thus: my father sent for his lawyer the other day, and, talking to him of this and that, expressed his wish that I was not to be told of his possession of a certain sum, no less than 20,000*l.*—of the existence of which he supposed me to be ignorant; only Tatham had, as it happened, already informed me of the fact. No doubt my father would have been angry: especially as the disclosure was made under the impression that I had succeeded to his throne; and hereupon the lawyer felt great alarm. In order to bribe me to secrecy—though I hope such a precaution was unnecessary—he has entrusted me with another secret, which time indeed must needs soon disclose—but which in the mean time is of immense importance to me. I started off within half an hour after I heard it to come and tell it you with my own lips.'

'Indeed! It is good news, I trust, though I cannot read it in your face.'

'Because my face does not know whether it be good or—indifferent. That will depend on you, Nellie.'

Raymond's voice was always musical, but this time when he spoke her name it sounded like the fragment of a song. She was still sitting on the stone, with her paint-brush lying idle in its box beside her; her face was turned up to his with quiet firmness, as he stood on the sand with his eyes fixed tenderly—but not confidently—upon her. There was genuine passion in his tone, but also earnestness, as though he believed with all his heart in the arguments he was about to urge; yet he had the air of a man who is pleading a lost cause.

'I did speak to my father about you, Nellie, though without using your name to back my suit. If I had done so, it would have been all the same. He would never, I think, have given his consent to our marriage.'

'It was not likely, Raymond; anyone but yourself would have known as much.'

'It was natural that I should put faith in my own father,' said he simply. 'I thought I could have convinced him that my

happiness was bound up in winning you; perhaps I did convince him, but if so, his will over-rode that consideration.' There was a tinge of bitterness in his speech that she had never observed before. 'At all events, he positively denied my prayer. He said that he could not make the least provision for our subsistence, in case I married you in the teeth of his disapproval, and that we should in fact be beggars.'

'I expected neither more nor less,' said Nellie quietly.

'Yes, but he—well, he omitted to say something which it did not suit him to say, but which Mr. Tatham has told me. Now let me ask you a question, Nellie. Are you ambitious? Have you set your mind on marrying a rich man? Are carriages and horses and men-servants necessary to your scheme of life?'

'Except since I have been living with Mrs. Wardlaw, I never tried them,' answered Nellie with a quiet smile. 'They do not give me any great pleasure as a guest, nor would it make much difference, I think, if I were their mistress.'

'I thought so,' exclaimed Raymond eagerly; 'it is only what I expected. You would be content with a little, even a very little, if it were shared with one you love. Nellie, darling, I have some money of my own left me by my mother, and which, when I come of age, will fall into my own hands. It will make me independent of my father; I am free, therefore, to marry you. Will you take me, Nellie, poor as I am?'

If, instead of using the first words that Love suggested, he had given himself up to composition for weeks, he could not have achieved a more eloquent peroration; that 'poor as I am' went straight to her very heart.

'Raymond, it is not *that*,' answered she earnestly. 'You have only done me justice in supposing that mere wealth would have little weight with me in such a matter; in your case it would have none whatever. But as regards the wish upon which you have set your boyish heart, believe me, Raymond, it can never be. I do not say but that it might have been, had your father come to a different decision. I know—for I have the utmost confidence in your generosity—that my frankness in confessing so much will be a reason why you should desist from importuning me. It can only be disappointment to yourself and pain to me.'

'You say "no," but you give no reasons,' pleaded Raymond bitterly.

'Because you are already in possession of them,' she answered quickly. 'What I said at Richmond, when you asked me the same question, I say again, and it has thrice the force that it had then. I am now certain that your father would never consent to our

marriage: that he would cast you off as his son if you disobeyed him. Do you suppose that I, who have confessed my love for you, will be your ruin? If it were only that I should cause a breach between you two which time would heal, I should hesitate to do so; I should shrink from standing even for a day between a son and his father; but you know as well as I do, that if this gulf were made, it would never be bridged over. I should rob you both of fortune and of father, and for ever, Raymond, so help me Heaven, I will not do it.'

'It was a foregone conclusion with you, then!' answered Raymond bitterly. 'You had resolved to deny me under all circumstances. You have not even asked what this independence is, which has bred in me such fruitless hope.'

'Because I know it, Raymond. It is three hundred a year, the same sum which your father has always allowed you.'

'You knew it, and you never told me!' answered he reproachfully.

'I have not known it long: I did not tell you because I felt it might feed your hopes: I trusted that before you came to know it the matter might have been settled, as it has been, by your father's voice: with that against me, if the sum you can call your own had been thrice as large, I should have refused to be the cause of your disinheritance. But I shall always love you, Raymond.'

He put up his hand in mute appeal for silence; he knew that the love of which she spoke was not the love he sought, and had no wish to hear of another.

'You will not part from me with anger in your heart?' said she; for, with bowed head, he had turned to go. 'I say, as I once said before, that you will thank me for this, one day, Raymond. It is as hard for me as it is for you, but it is right.'

'It is not so hard for you, or you would not do it,' he answered passionately. 'As for "right," do you think that this will reconcile me to my father—to the man who has parted you and me? No: I have lost you both.'

He stooped down quietly, kissed her forehead, and, with long strides upon the noiseless sand, took the way by which he had come.

'Why, Nellie, where is Raymond?' enquired Mrs. Wardlaw, when the girl, an hour afterwards, returned to the hotel. 'Is it possible he missed you?'

'No; I saw him,' said she.

'But he was to return and dine with us!' Then, with a change of voice, which showed that she had guessed the truth, 'Oh, Nellie, have you sent him away for ever?'

Her white pained face was answer enough.

‘I am very, very sorry, Nellie darling. Have you counted the cost? Are you quite sure of yourself, my pet?’

‘Quite sure, dear friend. I pray you never speak of it to me again.’ She was quite sure, and if she had not counted the cost, it was because it was incalculable: but the subject was one she henceforth shrank from even in thought.

(To be continued.)

THE snow had fallen, and
Unnoticed in the night,
As o'er the sleeping sons of
Floated the manna white
And still, though small flow
Blanched all the earth be
Angels with busy hands abo
Renewed the airy wreath
When, white amid the falling
And fairer far than they,
Beside her wintry casement h
A dying woman lay.
'More pure than yonder virgi
From God comes gently do
I left my happy country hom
She sighed, 'to seek the to
'More foul than yonder drift
Before the sun is high,
Down-trodden and defiled of r
More foul,' she wept, 'am I
Yet, as, in mid-day might cor
Thy good sun's face of fire
Draws the chaste spirit of the
To meet him from the mire
Lord, from this

BELGRAVIA

JANUARY 1878.

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK FIRST

Depicts the scenes which result from an antagonism between the hopes of four persons inhabiting one of the innermost recesses of Wessex. By reason of this strife of wishes, a happy consummation to all concerned is impossible, as matters stand; but an easing of the situation is begun by the inevitable decadence of a too capricious love, and rumours of a new arrival.

CHAPTER I.

A FACE UPON WHICH TIME MAKES BUT LITTLE IMPRESSION.

A SATURDAY afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment after moment. Overhead, the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen, the earth with the swarthiest of vegetation, their closing line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night, which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The meeting rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half-an-hour to eve; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll

Snow-Stains.

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 When, white amid the falling flakes,
 And fairer far than they,
 Beside her wintry casement hoar
 A dying woman lay.
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 From God comes gently down
 I left my happy country home,'
 She sighed, ' to seek the town.'
 ' More foul than yonder drift shall turn
 Before the sun is high,
 Down-trodden and defiled of men,
 More foul,' she wept, ' am I.
 Yet, as, in mid-day might confessed,
 Thy good sun's face of fire
 Draws the chaste spirit of the snow
 To meet him from the mire,
 Lord, from this leprous life in death
 Lift me, Thy Magdalene,
 That rapt into Redeeming Light
 I may once more be clean.'

A. PERCEVAL GRAVES.

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into darkness, the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began, and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it could not clearly be seen. Its completed effect and explanation lay in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn: then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was indeed a close relation of night; and when the night was beginning to draw near, a certain tendency to gravitate together could be perceived between its shades and the scene. The sombre stretches of round and hollow seemed to rise to meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy; nay, they anticipated its livery, putting on the obscurity of night while the upper night of the sky was still far in the distance. First, the heath exhaled darkness; next, the heavens precipitated it. The obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land then closed together in a black fraternisation towards which each advanced half way.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now. When other things sank brooding to sleep, the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed thus to await something. What it awaited none could say. It had waited unmoved during so many centuries, through the crises of so many other things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity. The qualifications which frequently invest the façade of a prison with far more dignity than is found in the façade of a palace double its size lent to this heath a sublimity in which spots renowned for their attractions were utterly wanting. Gay prospects wed happily with gay times; but alas, if times be not gay! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings over-sadly tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming.

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wear-

ing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. Shall we say that man has grown so accustomed to his spiritual Bastille that he no longer looks forward to, and even shrinks from, a casual emergence into unusual brightness? The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the mournful sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain, will be all of nature that is absolutely consonant with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen.

The most thorough-going ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Egdon: he was keeping within the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were at least the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists.

Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity. The storm was its lover: the wind was its friend. Then it became the lair of strange phantoms: it was found to be the hitherto unrecognised original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this.

It was at present an environment perfectly accordant with man's nature—a scene neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted, enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.

This obscure tract of land, this superseded country, this obsolete thing, figures in Domesday. Its condition is recorded therein as that of heathy, furzy, briary wilderness—'Bruaria.' Then follows the length and breadth in leagues; and, though some uncertainty exists as to the exact extent of this ancient lineal measure, it appears from the figures that the area of Egdon down to the present day has but little diminished. 'Turbaria Bruaria'—the right of cutting heath-turf—occurs in charters relating to the district. 'Overgrown with heth and mosse,' says Leland of the same dark sweep of country.

Here at least were intelligible facts regarding landscape—far-reaching proofs productive of genuine satisfaction. The untameable, Ishmaelitish thing that Egdon now was, it always had been. Civilisation was its enemy. Ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the formation. In its monomorphous costume lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. For this reason a person on a heath in raiment of modern cut and colours wears more or less an anomalous look. We seem to want the oldest and simplest human clothing where the clothing of the earth is so primitive.

To recline on a stump of thorn in the central valley of Egdon, between afternoon and night as now, where the eye could reach nothing of the world outside the summits and shoulders of heathland which filled the whole circumference of its glance, and to know that everything around and underneath had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead, gave ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New. The great inviolate place had an ancient permanence which the sea cannot claim. Who can say of a particular sea that it is old? Distilled by the sun, kneaded by the moon, it is renewed in a year, in a day, in an hour. The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers changed, the villages changed, the people changed, yet Egdon remained. Those surfaces were neither so steep as to be destructible by weather, nor so flat as to be the victim of floods and deposits. With the exception of an aged highway, and a still more aged barrow presently to be referred to—themselves almost crystallised to cosmic products by long continuance—even the trifling irregularities were not caused by pickaxe, plough, or spade, but remained as the very finger-touches of the last geological change.

The above-mentioned highway traversed in a straight line the lower levels of the heath, from one horizon to another. In many portions of its course it overlaid an old vicinal way, which branched from the great western road of the Romans, the *Via Iceniana*, or *Ikenild Street*, hard by. On the evening under consideration it would have been noticed that, though the gloom had increased sufficiently to confuse the minor features of the heath, the white surface of the road remained almost as clear as ever.

CHAPTER II.

HUMANITY APPEARS UPON THE SCENE, HAND IN HAND WITH TROUBLE.

ALONG the road walked an old man. He was white-headed as a mountain, bowed in the shoulders, and faded in general aspect. He wore a glazed hat, an ancient boat-cloak, and shoes; his brass buttons bearing an anchor upon their face. In his hand was a silver-headed walking-stick, which he used as a veritable third leg, perseveringly dotting the ground with its point at every few inches' interval. One would have said that he had been, in his day, a naval officer of some order or other.

Before him stretched the long laborious road, dry, straight, and white. It was quite open to the heath on each side, and bisected that vast dark surface like the parting-line on a head of raven hair, diminishing to a point on the farthest horizon.

The old man frequently stretched his eyes ahead to gaze over the tract that he yet had to traverse. At length he discerned, a long distance in front of him, a moving spot, which appeared to be a vehicle, and it proved to be going the same way as that in which he himself was journeying. It was the single atom of life that the scene contained, and it only served to render the general loneliness more palpable. Its rate of advance was slow, and the old man gained upon it sensibly.

When he drew nearer he perceived it to be a spring van, ordinary in shape, but singular in colour, this being a lurid red. The driver walked beside it. Like his van, he was completely red. One dye of that tincture covered his clothes, the cap upon his head, his boots, his face, his hands. He was not temporarily overlaid with the colour as with dirt: it permeated him.

The old man knew the meaning of this. The traveller with the cart was a reddleman—a person whose vocation it was to supply farmers with redding for their sheep. He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting, and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail.

The decayed officer, by degrees, came up alongside his fellow wayfarer, and wished him good evening. The reddleman turned his head, and replied in sad and occupied tones. He was young, and his face, if not exactly handsome, approached so near to handsome, that nobody would have contradicted an assertion that it really was so in its natural colour. His eye, which glared so

strangely through his stain, was in itself attractive—keen as that of a bird of prey, and blue as autumn mist. He had neither whisker nor moustache, which allowed the soft curves of the lower part of his face to be apparent. His lips were thin, and though, as it seemed, compressed by thought, there was a pleasant twitch at their corners now and then. He was clothed throughout in a tight-fitting suit of corduroy, excellent in quality, not much worn, and well chosen for its purpose; but deprived of its original colour by his trade. It showed to advantage the good shape of his figure. A certain well-to-do air about the man suggested that he was not poor for his degree. The natural query of an observer would have been, Why should such a promising being as this have hidden his prepossessing exterior by adopting that singular occupation?

After replying to the old man's greeting, he showed no inclination to continue in talk, although they still walked side by side, for the elder traveller seemed to desire company. There were no sounds but that of the booming wind upon the stretch of tawny herbage around them, the cracking wheels, the tread of the men, and the footsteps of the two shaggy ponies which drew the van. They were small, hardy animals, of a breed between Galloway and Exmoor, and were known as heath-croppers here.

Now as they thus pursued their way, the reddleman occasionally left his companion's side, and, stepping behind the van, looked into its interior through a small window. The look was always anxious. He would then return to the old man, who made another remark about the state of the country, to which the reddleman again abstractedly replied; and then again they would lapse into silence. The silence conveyed to neither any sense of awkwardness; in these lonely places wayfarers, after a first greeting, frequently plod on for miles without speech; contiguity amounts to a tacit conversation where, otherwise than in cities, such contiguity can be put an end to on the merest inclination, and where not to put an end to it is intercourse in itself.

Possibly these two might not have spoken again till their parting, had it not been for the reddleman's visits to his van. When he returned from his fifth time of looking in, the old man said, 'You have something inside there besides your load?'

'Yes.'

'Somebody who wants looking after?'

'Yes.'

Not long after this a sound came from the interior. It was a faint cry, apparently the voice of a female. The reddleman hastened to the back, looked in, and came away again.

'You have a child there, my man?'

‘No, sir, I have a woman.’

‘The deuce you have! Why did she cry out?’

‘Oh, she has fallen asleep, and, not being used to travelling, she’s uneasy, and keeps dreaming.’

‘A young woman?’

‘Yes, a young woman.’

‘That would have interested me forty years ago. Perhaps she’s your wife?’

‘My wife!’ said the other bitterly. ‘She’s above mating with such as I. But there’s no reason why I should tell you about that.’

‘That’s true. And there’s no reason why you should not. What harm can I do to you or to her?’

The reddleman looked in the old man’s face. ‘Well, sir,’ he said at last, ‘I knew her before to-day, though perhaps it would have been better if I had not. But she’s nothing to me, and I am nothing to her, and she wouldn’t have been in my van if any better carriage had been there to take her.’

‘Where, may I ask?’

‘At Southerton.’

‘I know the town well. What was she doing there?’

‘Oh, not much—to gossip about. However, she’s tired to death now, and not at all well, and that’s what makes her so restless. She dropped off into a nap about an hour ago, and ’twill do her good.’

‘A nice-looking girl, no doubt?’

‘You would say so.’

The other traveller turned his eyes with interest towards the van window, and, without withdrawing them, said, ‘I presume I might look in upon her?’

‘No,’ said the reddleman abruptly. ‘It is getting too dark for you to see much of her; and, more than that, I have no right to allow you. Thank God, she sleeps so well: I hope she won’t wake till she’s home.’

‘Who is she? One of the neighbourhood?’

‘Tis no matter who, excuse me.’

‘It is not that damsel of Blooms-End, who has been talked about more or less lately? If so, I know her; and I can guess what has happened.’

‘Tis no matter . . . Now, sir, I am sorry to say that we shall soon have to part company. My ponies are tired, and I have farther to go, and I am going to rest them under this bank for an hour.’

The elder traveller nodded his head indifferently, and the

reddleman turned his horses and van in upon the turf, saying, 'Good-night.' The old man replied, and proceeded on his way as before.

The reddleman watched his form as it diminished to a speck on the road, and became absorbed in the thickening films of night. He then took some hay from a truss which was slung up under the van, and, throwing a portion of it in front of the horses, made a pad of the rest, which he laid on the ground beside his vehicle. Upon this he sat down, leaning his back against the wheel. From the interior a low soft breathing came to his ear. It appeared to satisfy him, and he musingly surveyed the scene, as if considering the next step that he should take.

To do things musingly, and by small degrees, seemed, indeed, to be a duty in the Egdon valleys at this transitional hour, for there was that in the condition of the heath itself which resembled protracted and halting dubiousness. It was the quality of the stillness appertaining to the scene. This was not the stillness of actual stagnation, but the apparent stillness of incredible slowness. A condition of healthy life so nearly resembling the torpor of death is a noticeable thing of its sort; to exhibit the inertness of the desert, and at the same time to be exercising powers akin to those of the meadow, and even of the forest, awakened in those who thought of it the attentiveness usually engendered by understatement and reserve.

The scene before the reddleman's eyes was a gradual series of ascents from the level of the road backward into the heart of the heath. It embraced hillocks, pits, ridges, acclivities, one behind the other, till all was finished by a high hill cutting against the still light sky. The traveller's eye hovered about these things for a time, and finally settled upon one noteworthy object up there. It was a barrow. This bossy projection of earth above its natural level occupied the loftiest ground of the loneliest height that the heath contained. Although from the vale it appeared but as a wart on an Atlantean brow, its actual bulk was great. It formed the pole and axis of this heathery world.

As the resting man looked at the barrow he became aware that its summit, hitherto the highest object in the whole prospect round, was surmounted by something higher. What the barrow was to the hill supporting it, the object was to the barrow. It rose from the semi-globular mound like a spike from a helmet. The first instinct of an imaginative stranger might have been to suppose it the person of one of the Celts who built the barrow, so far had all of modern date withdrawn from the scene. It seemed

a sort of last man among them, musing for a moment before dropping into eternal night with the rest of his race.

There the form stood, motionless as the hill beneath. Above the plain rose the hill, above the hill rose the barrow, above the barrow rose the figure. Above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe.

Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills, that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern: with it, the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied. The scene was strangely homogeneous. The upland and the vale beneath it, the barrow and the figure above it, all of these amounted only to unity. Looking at this or that member of the group was not observing a complete thing, but a fraction of a thing.

The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon. Immobility being the prime characteristic of that whole to which its presence contributed a portion, the discontinuance of immobility in any quarter suggested confusion.

Yet that is what happened. The figure perceptibly gave up its fixity, shifted a step or two, and turned round. As if alarmed, it descended on the right side of the barrow, with the glissade of a water-drop down a bud, and then vanished. The movement had been sufficient to show more clearly the characteristics of the figure; it was a woman's.

The reason of her sudden displacement now appeared. With her dropping out of sight on the right side, a new-comer, bearing a burden, protruded into the sky on the left side, ascended the tumulus, and deposited the burden on the summit. A second followed, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, and ultimately the whole barrow was peopled with burdened figures.

The only intelligible meaning in this sky-backed pantomime of silhouettes was that the woman had no relation to the party which had taken her place, was sedulously avoiding these, and had come thither for another object than theirs. The imagination of the observer clung by preference to that vanished, solitary figure, as to something more interesting, more important, more likely to have a history worth knowing, than these new-comers; and unconsciously regarded them as intruders. But they remained, and established themselves; and the lonely female who hitherto had been queen of the solitude did not at present seem likely to return.

CHAPTER III.

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.

HAD a looker-on been posted in the immediate vicinity of the barrow he would have learned that these persons were boys and men of the neighbouring hamlets. Each, as he ascended the barrow, had been heavily laden with furze-faggots, carried upon the shoulder by means of a long stake sharpened at each end for impaling them easily—two in front and two behind. They came from a part of the heath a quarter of a mile to the rear, where furze almost exclusively prevailed as a product.

Every individual was so involved in furze by his method of carrying the faggots that he appeared like a bush on legs till he had thrown them down. The party had marched in trail, like a travelling flock of sheep; that is to say, the strongest first, the weak and young behind.

‘Twas a long way to bring ‘em,’ said one of these latter when he joined the rest on the summit. ‘I’d as soon have cut some here.’

‘No; ‘tis best not to steal your faggots where you light your fire.’

‘But we all know that thieving o’ fuel is no harm on the fifth of November, and you go to heaven just the same.’

‘So you do. ‘Tis no harm when you’ve gone to your last world, but it might be awkward while we live at home here. All the parishes used to be let cut furze and turf anywhere about, but they’ve took the right to it away from us now. However, to-night we’ll have our own.’

The loads were all laid together, and a pyramid of furze thirty feet in circumference now occupied the crown of the tumulus, which was known as Blackbarrow for many miles round. Some made themselves busy with matches, and in selecting the driest tufts of furze, others in loosening the bramble bonds which held the faggots together. Others, again, while this was in progress, lifted their eyes and swept the vast expanse of country commanded by this summit, now lying nearly obliterated by shade. In the valleys of the heath nothing save its own wild face was visible at any time of day; but this apex commanded an horizon enclosing tracts of far extent, and in many cases lying beyond the heath country. None of their features could be inspected now, but the whole made itself felt as a vague confrontation of remoteness.

While the men and lads were building the pile, a change took place in the mass of shade which denoted the distant landscape. Red suns and tufts of fire one by one began to arise, flecking the

whole country round. They were the bonfires of other parishes and hamlets who were engaged in the same sort of commemoration. Some were distant, and stood in a dense atmosphere, so that bundles of pale straw-like beams radiated around them in the shape of a fan. Some were large and near, glowing scarlet-red from the shade, like wounds in the flank of an Ethiopian. Some were *Mænades*, with winy faces and blown hair. These tintured the silent bosom of the clouds above them and irradiated their ephemeral caves, which seemed thenceforth to become scalding cauldrons. Perhaps as many as thirty bonfires could be counted within the whole periphery of the district; and as the hour may be told on a clockface when the figures themselves are invisible, so did the men recognise the locality of each fire by its angle and direction, though nothing of the scenery could be viewed.

The first tall flame from Blackbarrow now sprang into the sky, attracting all eyes that had been fixed on the distant conflagrations back to their own attempt in the same kind. The cheerful blaze streaked the inner surface of the human circle—now increased by other stragglers, male and female—with its own aureate livery, and even overlaid the dark turf around with a lively luminousness, which softened off into obscurity where the barrow rounded downwards out of sight. It showed the barrow to be the segment of a globe, as perfect as on the day that it was thrown up, even the little ditch remaining from which the earth was dug. Not a plough had ever disturbed a grain of that stubborn soil. In the heath's barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian. There had been no obliteration because there had been no tending.

It was now as if the bonfire-makers were standing in some radiant upper story of the world, detached from and independent of the dark stretches below. The heath down there was now a vast abyss, and no longer a continuation of what they stood on; for their eyes, adapted to the blaze, could see nothing of the deeps beyond its influence. Occasionally, it is true, a more vigorous flare than usual from their faggots sent darting lights like *aides-de-camp* down the inclines to some distant bush, pool, or patch of white sand, kindling these to replies of the same colour, till all was lost in darkness again. Then the whole black phenomenon beneath represented *Limbo* as viewed from the brink by the sublime Florentine in his vision, and the muttered articulations of the wind in the hollows were as complaints and petitions from the 'souls of mighty worth' suspended therein.

It was as if these men and boys had suddenly delved into the ages and fetched therefrom an hour and deed which had before

been familiar with this spot. The ashes of the original British pyre that blazed from that summit lay fresh and undisturbed in the barrow beneath their tread. The flames from funeral piles long ago kindled there had shone down upon the lowlands as these were shining now. Festival fires to Thor and Woden had followed on the same ground, and duly had their day. Indeed, it is pretty well known that such blazes as this the heathmen were now enjoying are rather the lineal descendants from jumbled Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies than the invention of popular feeling about Gunpowder Plot.

Moreover, to light a fire is the instinctive and resistant act of man when, at the winter ingress, the curfew is sounded throughout Nature. It indicates a spontaneous, Promethean rebelliousness against the fiat that this brumal season shall bring foul times, cold darkness, misery, and death. Black chaos comes, and the fettered gods of the earth say, Let there be light.

The vehement lights and sooty shades which struggled upon the skin and clothes of the individuals standing round caused their lineaments and general contours to be drawn with Tintoretto's vigour, crudeness, and dash. Yet the permanent moral expression of each face it was impossible to discover, for as the nimble flames towered, nodded, and swooped through the surrounding air the blots of shade and flakes of light upon the countenances of the group changed shape and position endlessly. All was unstable; quivering as leaves, evanescent as lightning. Shadowy eye-sockets deep as those of a death's head suddenly turned into pits of lustre: a lantern-jaw was cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasised to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray. Nostrils were dark wells; sinews in old necks were gilt mouldings; things with no particular polish on them were glazed; bright objects, such as the tip of a furze-hook one of the men carried, were as glass; eyeballs glowed like little lanterns. Those whom Nature had depicted as merely quaint became grotesque, the grotesque became preternatural; for all was in extremity.

Hence it may be that the face of an old man, who had like others been called to the heights by the rising flames, was not really the mere pose and chin that it appeared to be, but an appreciable quantity of human countenance. He stood complacently sunning himself in the heat. With a speaker, or stake, he tossed the outlying scraps of fuel into the conflagration, looking at the midst of the pile, occasionally lifting his eyes to measure the height of the flame, or to follow the great sparks which rose with it and sailed away into darkness. The beaming sight, and the penetrating warmth, seemed to breed in him a cumulative cheer-

fulness, which soon amounted to delight. With his stick in his hand he began to jig a private minuet, a bunch of copper seals shining and swinging like a pendulum from under his waistcoat: he also began to sing, in the voice of a bee up a flue:—

The king' call'd down' his no'-bles all',
By one', by two', by three';
Earl Mar'-shal, I'll go shrive' the queen',
And thou' shalt wend' with me'.

A boon', a boon', quoth Earl' Mar'-shal',
And fell' on his bend'-ed knee',
That what'-so-e'er' the queen' shall say',
No harm' there-of' may be'.

Want of breath prevented a continuance of the song; and the breakdown attracted the attention of a firm-standing man of middle age, who kept each corner of his crescent-shaped mouth rigorously drawn back into his cheek, as if to do away with any suspicion of mirthfulness which might erroneously have attached to him.

'A fair stave, Grandfer Cante; but I am afeard 'tis too much for the mouldy weasand of such a old man as you,' he said to the wrinkled reveller. Dostn't wish th' wast three sixes again, Grandfer, as you was when you first learnt to sing it?'

'Hey?' said Grandfer Cante, stopping in his dance.

'Dostn't wish wast young again? I say. There's a hole in thy poor bellows nowadays seemingly.'

'But there's good art in me. If I couldn't make a little wind go a long ways I should seem no younger than the most aged man, should I, Timothy?'

'And how about the new-married folks down there at the Quiet Woman Inn?' the other inquired, pointing towards a dim light in the direction of the distant highway, but considerably to the west of where the reddleman was resting. 'What's the rights of the matter about 'em? You ought to know, being an understanding man.'

'But a little rakish, hey? I own to it. Master Cante is that, or he's nothing. Yet 'tis a gay fault, neighbour Fairway, that age will cure.'

'I heard that they were coming home to-night. By this time they must have come. What besides?'

'The next thing is for us to go and wish 'em joy, I suppose.'

'Well, no.'

'No? Now, I thought we must. I must, or 'twould be very unlike me—the first in every spree that's going:—

Do thou' put on' a fri'-ar's coat',
 And I'll' put on' a-no'-ther,
 And we' will to' Queen Ele'-anor go',
 Like Fri'-ar and' his bro'-ther.

I met Mis'ess Yeobright, the young bride's aunt, last night, and she told me that her son Clym was coming home a' Christmas. Wonderful clever, 'a b'lieve—ah, I should like to have all that's under that young man's hair. Well, then I spoke to her in my well-known merry way, and she said, "O that what's shaped so venerable should talk like a fool!"—that's what she said to me. I don't care for her, be jowned if I do, and so I told her. "Be jowned if I care for 'ee," I said. I had her there—hey?'

'I rather think she had you,' said Fairway.

'No,' said Grandfer Cantle, his countenance slightly flagging. 'Tisn't so bad as that with me?'

'Seemingly 'tis; however, is it because of the wedding that Clym is coming home a' Christmas—to make a new arrangement because his mother is now left in the house alone?'

'Yes, yes—that's it. But, Timothy, hearken to me,' said the Grandfer earnestly. 'Though known as such a joker, I be a understanding man if you catch me serious, and I am serious now. I can tell 'ee lots about the married couple. Yes, this morning at six o'clock they went up the country to do the job, and neither vell nor mark have been seen of 'em since, though I reckon that this afternoon has brought 'em home again, man and woman—wife, that is. Isn't it spoke like a man, Timothy, and wasn't Mis'ess Yeobright wrong about me?'

'Yes, it will do. I didn't know the two had walked together since last fall, when her mother forbad the banns. How long has this new set-to been in mangling, then? Do you know, Humphrey?'

'Yes, how long?' said Grandfer Cantle, turning to Humphrey likewise. 'I ask that question.'

'Ever since her aunt altered her mind, and said she might hae the man after all,' replied Humphrey, without removing his eyes from the fire. He was a somewhat solemn young fellow, and carried the hook and leather gloves of a furze-cutter, his legs, by reason of that occupation, being sheathed in bulging leggings as stiff as the Philistine's greaves of brass. 'That's why they went away to be married, I count. You see, after kicking up such a nunnywatch and forbidding the banns, 'twould have made Mis'ess Yeobright seem foolish-like to have a banging wedding in the same parish all as if she'd never gainsaid it all.'

'Exactly—seem foolish-like; and that's very bad for the poor

things that be so, though I only guess as much, to be sure,' said Grandfer Cattle, still strenuously preserving a sensible bearing and mien.

'Ah, well, I was at church that day,' said Fairway, 'which was a very curious thing to happen.'

'If 'twasn't my name's Simple,' said the Grandfer emphatically, 'I ha'n't been there to-year; and now the winter is a-coming on I won't say I shall.'

'I ha'n't been these three years,' said Humphrey; 'for I'm so mortal sleepy of a Sunday; and 'tis so mortal far to get there; and when you do get there 'tis such a mortal poor chance that you'll be chose for up above, when so many baint, that I bide at home and don't go at all.'

'I not only happened to be there,' said Fairway, with a fresh collection of emphasis, 'but I was sitting in the same pew as Mis'ess Yeobright. And though you may not see it as such, it fairly made my blood run cold to hear her. Yes, it is a curious thing; but it made my blood run cold, for I was close at her elbow.' The speaker looked round upon the bystanders, now drawing closer to hear him, with his lips gathered tighter than ever in the rigorousness of his descriptive moderation.

'Tis a serious job to have things happen to 'ee there,' said a woman behind.

"Hereafter hold his peace" were the passon's words,' Fairway continued. And then up stood a woman at my side—a-touching of me. "Well, be d—— if there isn't Mis'ess Yeobright a standing up," I said to myself. Yes, neighbours, though I was in the temple of prayer that's what I said. 'Tis against my conscience to cuss and swear in company, and I hope any woman here will overlook it. Still, what I did say I did say, and 'twould be a lie if I didn't own it.'

'So 'twould, neighbour Fairway.'

"Be d—— if there isn't Mis'ess Yeobright a-standing up," I said,' the narrator repeated, giving out the bad word with the same passionless severity of face as before, which proved how entirely necessity and not gusto had to do with the iteration. And the next thing I heard was, "I forbid the banns," from her. "I'll speak to you after the service," says the passon, in quite a homely way—yes, turning all at once into a common man no holier than you or I. Ah, her face was pale! Maybe you can call to mind that monument in church—the cross-legged sojer that have had his nose knocked away by the school-children? Well, he would about have matched that woman's face, when she said, "I forbid the banns."

The audience cleared their throats and tossed a few stalks into the fire, not because these deeds were urgent, but to give themselves time to weigh the moral of the story.

'I'm sure when I heard they'd been forbid I felt as glad as if anybody had gied me sixpence,' said an earnest voice—that of Olly Dowden, a woman who lived by making heath brooms, or besoms. Her nature was to be civil to enemies as well as to friends, and grateful to all the world for letting her remain alive.

'And now the maid have married him just the same,' said Humphrey.

'After that Mis'ess Yeobright came round and was quite agreeable,' Fairway resumed, with an unheeding air, which tended to show that his words, though apparently an appendage to Humphrey's, were actually the result of independent reflection.

'Supposing they were ashamed, I don't see why they shouldn't have done it here-right,' said a wide-spread woman whose stays creaked like shoes whenever she stooped or turned. 'Tis well to call the neighbours together and to hae a good racket once now and then; and it may as well be when there's a wedding as at tide-times. I don't care for close ways.'

'Ah, now, you'd hardly believe it, but I don't care for gay weddings,' said Timothy Fairway, his eyes again travelling round. 'I hardly blame Thomasin Yeobright and neighbour Wildeve for doing it quiet, if I must own it. A wedding at home means five and six handed reels by the hour; and they do a man's legs no good when he's over forty.'

'True. Once at the woman's house you can hardly say nay to being one in a jig, knowing all the time that you be expected to make yourself worth yer victuals.'

'You be bound to dance at Christmas because 'tis the time o' year; you must dance at weddings because 'tis the time of life. At christenings folk will even smuggle in a reel or two, if 'tis no further on than the first or second chiel. And this is not naming the songs you've got to sing. For my part, I like a good hearty funeral as well as anything. You've as splendid victuals and drink as at other parties, and even better. And it don't wear yer legs to stumps in talking over a poor feller's ways as it do to stand up in hornpipes.'

'Nine folk out of ten would own 'twas going too far to dance then, I suppose?' said Grandfer Cattle, inquiringly

'Tis the only sort of party a staid man can feel safe at after the mug have been round a few times.'

'Well, I can't understand a lady-like little body like Tamsin Yeobright caring to be married in such a mean way,' said Susan

Nunsuch, the wide woman, who preferred the original subject. 'Tis worse than the poorest do. And I shouldn't have cared about the man, though some may say he's good-looking.'

'To give him his due, he's a clever, learned feller in his way—almost as clever as Clym Yeobright used to be. He was brought up to better things than keeping the Quiet Woman. An engineer—that's what the man was, as we know; but he threw away his chance, and so 'a took a public-house to live. His learning was no use to him at all.'

'Very often the case,' said Olly, the besom-maker. 'And yet how people do strive after it and get it! The class of folk that couldn't use to make a round O to save their bones from the pit of salvation can write their names now without a sputter of the pen, oftentimes without a single blot: what do I say?—why, almost without a desk to lean their stomachs and elbows upon.'

'True: 'tis amazing what a polish the world have been brought to, as you say,' said Humphrey.

'Why, afore I went a soldier in the Bang-up Locals (as we were called), in the year four,' chimed in Grandfer Cantle brightly, 'I didn't know no more what the world was like than the commonest man among ye. And now, jown it all, I won't say what I baint fit for, hey?'

'Couldst sign the book no doubt,' said Fairway, 'if wast young enough to jine hands with a woman again, like Wildeve and Mis'ess Tamsin, which is more than Humph there could do, for he follows his father in learning. Ah, Humph, well I can mind when I was married how I seed thy father's mark staring me in the face as I went to put down my name. He and your mother were the couple married just afore we were, and there stood thy father's cross with arms stretched out like a great banging scarecrow. What a terrible black cross that was—thy father's ver likeness was in en! To save my soul I couldn't help laughing when I seed en, though all the time I were as hot as dogdays, what with the marrying, and what with the woman, and what with Jack Changley and a lot more chaps winking their eyes at me through church winder. But the next moment a strawmote would have knocked me down, for I called to mind that if thy father and mother had had high words once they'd been at it twenty times since they'd been man and wife, and I seed myself as the next poor stunpoll to get into the same mess. . . . Ah—well, what a day 'twas!'

'Wildeve is older than Tamsin Yeobright by a good-few summers. A pretty maid too she is. A young woman with a home must be a fool to tear her cap for a man like that.'

The audience cleared their throats and together joined the fire, not because these deeds were urgent, but shaped spade selves time to weigh the moral of the story. . . . and its well-

'I'm sure when I heard they'd been forbid . . . of the fire. anybody had gied me sixpence,' said an . . . he'd asked 'em,' Olly Dowden, a woman who lived by m . . . besoms. Her nature was to be civil to . . . no woman at all friends, and grateful to all the world for . . .

'And now the maid have married . . . Humphrey.

'After that Mis'ess Yeobright can . . . agreeable,' Fairway resumed, with an . . . Fairway, adding more to show that his words, though ap . . . such a man. But only Humphrey's, were actually the result . . . make round, as if it

'Supposing they were ashamed, . . . taken through thick- have done it here-right,' said a . . . he said.

creaked like shoes whenever she st . . . poor fellow have been call the neighbours together and . . .

and then; and it may as well be . . . a dumb man, nor a blind times. I don't care for close wa . . .

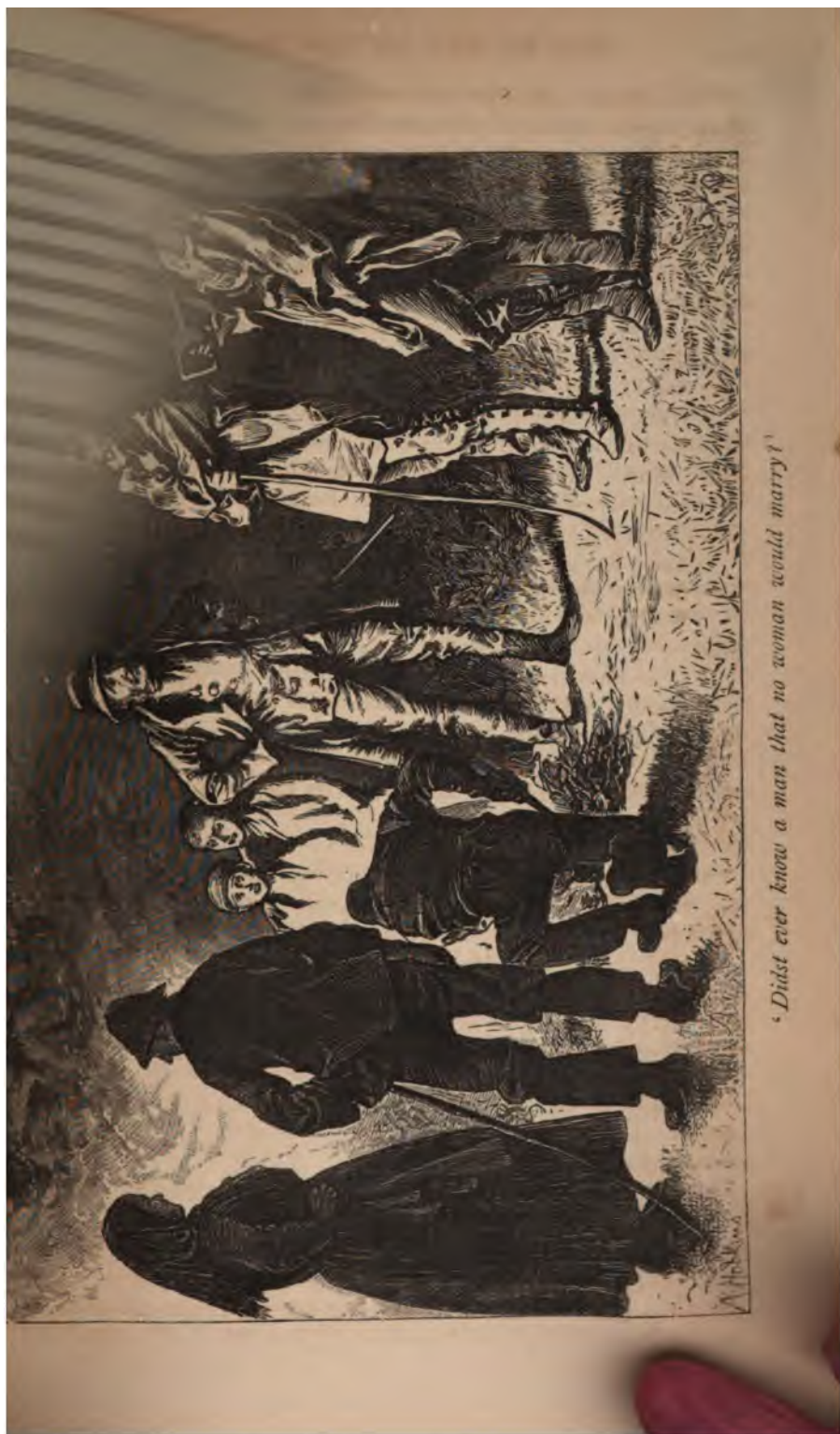
'Ah, now, you'd hardly be . . . Olly Dowden. weddings,' said Timothy Fairway . . . no name. . . . Come, 'I hardly blame Thomasin Ye . . . doing it quiet, if I must own . . . chattering for?' said a and six handed reels by the . . . the other side of the blaze. good when he's over forty.

'True. Once at the w . . . to reply, 'No, not at all.' being one in a jig, know . . . show yerself. I didn't know ye make yourself worth yer . . . look across towards that

'You be bound to . . . look across towards that o' year; you must dam . . . with reedy hair, no shoulders, At christenings folk . . . and ankle beyond his clothes, no further on than . . . and was pushed by the will naming the songs you . . . He was Grandfer Cantle's hearty funeral as we . . . and drink as at other . . . yer legs to stump . . . Christian?' said the turf-cutter stand up in hornp . . .

'Nine folk out . . . then, I suppose? . . . will marry.' the mug have . . . said Timothy Fairway, enlarging his

'Well, I c . . . whole surface and a great deal more; Yeobright can . . . while staring as a hen stares at the duck she



'Didst ever know a man that no woman would marry?'

The speaker, a peat^r or turf-cutter, who had newly joined the group, carried across his shoulder the singular heart-shaped spade of large dimensions used in that species of labour; and its well-whetted edge gleamed like a silver bow in the beams of the fire.

‘A hundred maidens would have had him if he’d asked ‘em,’ said the wide woman.

‘Didst ever know a man, neighbour, that no woman at all would marry?’ inquired Humphrey.

‘I never did,’ said the turf-cutter.

‘Nor I,’ said another.

‘Nor I,’ said Grandfer Cantle.

‘Well, now, I did once,’ said Timothy Fairway, adding more firmness to one of his legs. ‘I did know of such a man. But only once, mind.’ He gave his throat a thorough rake round, as if it were the duty of every person not to be mistaken through thickness of voice. ‘Yes, I know’d of such a man,’ he said.

‘And what ghastly gallicrow might the poor fellow have been like, Master Fairway?’ asked the turf-cutter.

‘Well, ‘a was neither a deaf man, nor a dumb man, nor a blind man.’

‘Is he know’d in these parts?’ said Olly Dowden.

‘Hardly,’ said Timothy; ‘but I name no name. . . . Come, keep the fire up there, youngsters.’

‘Whatever is Christian Cantle’s teeth a-chattering for?’ said a boy from amid the smoke and shades on the other side of the blaze. ‘Be ye a-cold, Christian?’

A thin jibbering voice was heard to reply, ‘No, not at all.’

‘Come forward, Christian, and show yerself. I didn’t know ye was here,’ said Fairway, with a humane look across towards that quarter.

Thus requested, a faltering man, with reedy hair, no shoulders, and a great quantity of wrist and ankle beyond his clothes, advanced a step or two by his own will, and was pushed by the will of others half-a-dozen steps more. He was Grandfer Cantle’s youngest son.

‘What be ye quaking for, Christian?’ said the turf-cutter kindly.

‘I be the man.’

‘What man?’

‘The man no woman will marry.’

‘The deuce you be!’ said Timothy Fairway, enlarging his gaze to cover Christian’s whole surface and a great deal more; Grandfer Cantle meanwhile staring as a hen stares at the duck she has hatched.



'Didst ever know a man that no woman would marry?'

'Yes, I be he; and it makes me afeard,' said Christian. 'D'ye think 'twill hurt me? I shall always say I don't care, and swear to it, though I do care all the while.'

'Well, be d—— if this isn't the queerest start ever I know'd,' said Mr. Fairway. 'I didn't mean you at all. There's another in the country, then! Why did ye reveal yer misfortune, Christian?'

''Twas to be if 'twas, I suppose. I can't help it, can I?' He turned upon them his painfully circular eyes, surrounded by concentric lines like targets.

'No, that's true. But 'tis a melancholy thing, and really my blood runn'd cold when you spoke, for I feel'd there were two poor fellers where I had thought only one. 'Tis a sad thing for 'ee, Christian. How'st know the women won't hae thee?'

'I've asked 'em.'

'Sure I should never have thought you had the face. Well, and what did the last one say to 'ee? Nothing that can't he got over, perhaps, after all?'

'“Get out of my sight, you slack-twisted, slim-looking fool,” was the woman's words to me.'

'Not encouraging, I own,' said Fairway. '“Get out of sight, you slack-twisted, slim-looking fool,” is rather a hard way of saying No. But even that might be overcome by time and patience, so as to let a few grey hairs show themselves in the hussy's head. How old be you, Christian?'

'Thirty-one last tatie-digging, Mister Fairway.'

'Not a boy—not a boy. Still there's hope yet.'

'That's my age by baptism, because that's put down in the great book of the judgment-day that they keep down in church vestry; but mother told me I was born some time afore I was christened.'

'Ah!'

'But she couldn't tell when, to save her life, except that there was no moon.'

'No moon: that's bad. Hey, neighbours, that's bad for him?'

'Yes, 'tis bad,' said Grandfer Cantle, shaking his head.

'Mother know'd 'twas no moon, for she asked another woman that had a almanac, as she did whenever a boy was born to her, because of the saying, “No moon, no man,” which made her afeard every manchild she had. Do ye really think it serious, Mister Fairway, that there was no moon?'

'Yes; “No moon, no man.” 'Tis one of the truest sayings ever spit out. The boy never comes to nothing that's born at new

moon. A bad job for 'ee, Christian, that you should have showed your nose then of all days in the month.'

'I suppose the moon was terrible full when you were born?' said Christian, with a look of hopeless admiration at Fairway.

'Well, 'a was not new,' Mr. Fairway replied, with a disinterested gaze.

'I'd sooner go without drink at Lammas-tide than be a man of no moon,' continued Christian, in the same shattered recitative. 'Tis said I be only the rames of a man, and no good in the world at all; and I suppose that's the cause o't.'

'Ay,' said Grandfer Cantle, somewhat subdued in spirit; 'and yet his mother cried for scores of hours when 'a was a boy, for fear he should outgrow himself, and go a sojer.'

'Well, there's many just as bad as he,' said Fairway. 'Wethers must live their time as well as other sheep, poor soul.'

'So perhaps I shall rub on? Ought I to be afeard o' nights, Master Fairway?'

'You'll have to lie alone all your life; and 'tis not to married couples but to single sleepers that a ghost shows himself when 'a do come. One have been seed lately, too. A very strange one.'

'No—don't talk about it if 'tis agreeable of ye not to. 'Twill make my skin crawl when I think of it in bed alone. But you will—ah, you will, I know, Timothy; and I shall dream all night o't. A very strange one? What sort of a spirit did ye mean when ye said, a very strange one, Timothy?—no, no—don't tell me.'

'I don't half believe in spirits myself. But I think it ghostly enough—what I was told. 'Twas a little boy that seed it.'

'What was it like?—no, don't—'

'A red one. Yes, most ghosts be white; but this is as if it had been dipped in blood.'

Christian drew a deep breath without letting it expand his body, and Humphrey said, 'Where have it been seed?'

'Not exactly here; but in this same heath. But 'tisn't a thing to talk about. What do ye say,' continued Fairway in brisker tones, and turning upon them as if the idea had not been Grandfer Cantle's; 'what do ye say to giving the new man and wife a bit of a song-to-night afore we go to bed—being their wedding day? When folks be just married 'tis as well to look glad o't, since looking sorry won't unjoin 'em. I be no drinker, as ye know, but when the womenfolk and youngsters have gone home we can drop down across to the Quiet Woman, and strike up a ballet in front of the married folks' door. 'Twill please the young wife, and that's

what I should like to do, for many's the skinful I've had at her hands when she lived with her aunt at Blooms-End.'

'Hey? And so we will!' said Grandfer Cante, turning so briskly that his copper seals swung extravagantly. 'I'm as dry as a kex with biding up here in the wind, and I haven't seen the colour of drink since nammet-time to-day. He said that the last brew at the Woman is very pretty drinking. And neighbours, if we should be a little late in the finishing, why, to-morrow's Sunday, and we can sleep it off?'

'Grandfer Cante! you take things very careless for an old man,' said the wide woman.

'I take things careless; I do—too careless to please the women! Kik! I'll sing the "Jovial Crew," or any other song, when a weak old man would cry his eyes out. Jown it; I be up for anything:

The king' look'd o'-ver his left' shoul-der',
And a grim' look look'-ed hee',
Earl mar'-shal, he said', but for' my oath',
Or hang'-ed thou' should'st bee'.

'Well, that's what we'll do,' said Fairway. 'We'll give 'em a song, an it please the Lord. What's the good of Thomasin's cousin Clym a coming home after the deed's done? He should have come afore, if so be he wanted to stop it, and marry her himself.'

'Perhaps he's coming to bide with his mother a little time, as she must feel lonely now the maid's gone.'

'Now, 'tis very odd, but I never feel lonely—no, not at all,' said Grandfer Cante. 'I'm as brave in the night-time as a admiral!'

The bonfire was by this time beginning to sink low, for the fuel had not been of that substantial sort which can support a blaze long. Most of the other fires within the wide horizon were also dwindling weak. Attentive observation of their brightness, colour, and length of existence would have revealed the quality of the material burnt; and through that, to some extent, the natural produce of the district in which each bonfire was situate. The clear, kingly effulgence that had characterised the majority expressed a heath and furze country like their own, which in one direction extended an unlimited number of miles: the rapid flares and extinctions at other points of the compass showed the lightest of fuel—straw, bean-stalks, and the usual waste from arable land. The most enduring of all—steady unaltering eyes like planets, signified wood—such as hazel branches, thorn-faggots, and stout billets. Fires of the last-mentioned materials were rare, and, though comparatively small in magnitude beside the transient

blazes, now began to get the best of [them by mere long-continuance. The great ones had perished, but these remained. They occupied the remotest visible positions—sky-backed summits rising out of rich copse and plantation-districts to the north, where the soil was different, and heath foreign and strange.

Save one; and this was the nearest of any, the moon of the whole shining throng. It lay in a direction precisely opposite to that of the little window in the vale below. Its nearness was such that, notwithstanding its actual dimension—not one quarter the probable size of the others—its glow infinitely transcended theirs.

This quiet eye had attracted attention from time to time; and when their own fire had become sunken and dim it attracted more; for though some even of the wood fires more recently lighted had reached their decline, no change was perceptible here.

‘To be sure, how near that fire is!’ said Fairway. ‘Seemingly, I can see a feller of some sort walking round it. Little and good must be said of that fire, surely.’

‘I can throw a stone there,’ said a boy.

‘And so can I!’ said Grandfer Cantle.

‘No, no you can’t, my sonnies. That fire is not much less than a mile and half off, for all that ‘a seems so near.’

‘‘Tis in the heath, but not furze,’ said the turf-cutter.

‘‘Tis cleft-wood, that’s what ‘tis,’ said Timothy Fairway. ‘Nothing would burn like that except clean timber. And ‘tis on the knap afore the old captain’s house at Mistover. Such a queer martel as that man is, to be sure. To have a little fire inside your own bank and ditch, that nobody else may enjoy it or come anigh it. And what a zany an old chap must be, to light a bonfire when there’s no youngsters to please!’

‘Cap’n Drew have been for a long walk to-day, and is quite tired out,’ said Grandfer Cantle, ‘so ‘tisn’t likely to be he.’

‘And he would hardly afford good fuel like that,’ said the wide woman.

‘Then it must be his grand-daughter,’ said Fairway. ‘Not that a body of her age can want a fire much.’

‘I don’t know about that,’ said Susan Nunsuch. ‘She is very strange in her ways, living up there by herself, and such things please her.’

‘She’s a well-favoured maid enough,’ said Humphrey the furze-cutter; ‘especially when she’s got one of her dandy gowns on.’

‘That’s true,’ said Fairway. ‘Well; let her bonfire burn an ‘twill. Ours is well-nigh out by the look o’t.’

‘How dark ‘tis now the fire’s gone down!’ said Christian

Cantle, looking behind him with his hare eyes. 'Don't ye think we'd better get home along, neighbours? The heth isn't haunted, I know; but we'd better get home. Ah, what was that?'

'Only the wind,' said the turf-cutter.

'I don't think fifth-of-Novembers ought to be kept up by night except in towns. It should be by day in outstep, ill-accounted places like this!'

'Nonsense, Christian. Lift up yer spirits like a man! Susy, dear, you and I will have a jig—hey, my honey? before 'tis quite too dark to see how well-favoured you be still, though so many summers have passed since yer husband, a son of a gun, snapped you up from me.'

This was addressed to Susan Nunsuch; and the next circumstance of which the beholders were conscious was a vision of the matron's broad form whisking off towards the space whereon the fire had been kindled. She was lifted bodily by Mr. Fairway's arm, which had been flung round her waist before she had become aware of his intention. The site of the fire was now merely a circle of ashes flecked with red embers and sparks, the furze having burnt completely away. Once within the circle he whirled her round and round in a dance. She was a woman noisily constructed; in addition to her enclosing framework of whalebone and lath, she wore pattens summer and winter, in wet weather and in dry, to preserve her boots from wear; and when Fairway began to jump about with her, the clicking of the pattens, the creaking of the stays, and her screams of surprise, formed a very audible concert.

'I'll crack thy numskull for thee, you mandy chap,' said Mrs. Nunsuch, as she helplessly danced round with him, her feet playing like drumsticks among the sparks. 'My ankles were all in a fever afore, from walking through that prickly furze, and now you must make 'em worse with these vlankers!'

The vagary of Timothy Fairway was infectious. The turf-cutter seized old Olly Dowden, and, somewhat more gently, poussetted with her likewise. The young men were not slow to imitate the example of their elders, and seized the maids; Grandfer Cantle and his stick jiggled in the form of a three-legged object among the rest; and in half a minute all that could be seen on Blackbarrow was a whirling of dark shapes amid a boiling confusion of sparks, which leapt around the dancers as high as their waists. The chief noises were women's shrill cries, men's laughter, Susan's stays and pattens, old Olly Dowden's 'heu-heu-heu!' and the strumming of the wind upon the furze-bushes, which formed a kind of tune to the demoniac measure they trod. Christian alone

stood aloof, uneasily rocking himself as he murmured, 'They ought not to do it—how the vlankers do fly! 'tis tempting the wicked one, 'tis.'

'What was that?' said one of the lads, stopping.

'Ah—where?' said Christian, hastily closing up to the rest.

The dancers all lessened their speed.

''Twas behind you, Christian, that I heard it—down there.'

'Hoi-i-i-i!' cried a voice from the darkness.

'Halloo-o-o-o!' said Fairway.

'Is there any cart-track up across here to Mis'ess Yeobright's, of Blooms-End?' came to them in the same voice, as a long, slim indistinct figure approached the barrow.

'Ought we not to run home as hard as we can, neighbours, as 'tis getting late?' said Christian. 'Not run away from one another, you know; run close together, I mean.'

'Scrape up a few stray locks of furze, and make a blaze, so that we can see who the man is,' said Fairway.

When the flame arose it revealed a young man in tight raiment, and red from top to toe. 'Is there a track across here to Mis'ess Yeobright's house?' he repeated.

'Ay—keep along the path down there.'

'I mean a way two horses and a van can travel over.'

'Well, yes; you can get up the vale below here with time. The track is rough, but if you've got a light your horses may pick along wi' care. Have ye brought your cart far up, neighbour reddleman?'

'I've left it in the bottom, about half a mile back. I stepped on in front to make sure of the way, as 'tis night time, and I ha'n't been here for so long.'

'Oh, well, you can get up,' said Fairway. 'What a turn it did give me when I seed him,' he added, to the whole group, the reddleman included. 'Lord's sake, I thought, whatever fiery mommet is this come to trouble us! No slight to your looks, reddleman, for ye baint bad-looking in the groundwork, though the finish is queer. My meaning is just to say how curious I felt. I half thought 'twas the devil or the red ghost the boy told of.'

'It gied me a turn likewise,' said Susan Nunsuch, 'for I had a dream last night of a death's head.'

'Don't ye talk o't no more,' said Christian.

'Well, thank ye for telling me,' said the young reddleman, smiling faintly. 'And good-night t'ye all.'

He withdrew from their sight down the barrow.

'I fancy I've seen that young man's face before,' said

Humphrey. 'But where, or how, or what his name is, I don't know.'

The reddleman had not been gone more than a few minutes when another person approached the partially revived bonfire. It proved to be a well-known and respected widow of the neighbourhood, of a standing which can only be expressed by the word genteel. Her face, encompassed by the blackness of the receding heath, showed whitely, and without half-lights, like a cameo.

She was a woman of middle age, with well-formed features of the type usually found where perspicacity is the prominent quality enthroned within. At moments she seemed to be regarding issues from a Nebo denied to others around. She had something of an estranged mien: the solitude exhaled from the heath was concentrated in this face that had risen from it. The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level. The explanation lay in the fact that, though her husband had been a small farmer, she herself was a curate's daughter who had once dreamt of doing better things.

Persons with any weight of character carry, like planets, their atmospheres along with them in their orbits; and the matron who entered now upon the scene could, and usually did, bring her own tone into a company. Her normal manner among the heathfolk had that reticence which results from the consciousness of superior communicative power. But the effect of coming into society and light after lonely wandering in darkness is a sociability in the comer above its usual pitch, expressed in the features even more than in the words.

'Why, 'tis Mis'ess Yeobright,' said Fairway. 'Mis'ess Yeobright, not ten minutes ago a man was here asking for 'ee—a reddleman.'

'What did he want?' said she.

'He didn't tell us.'

'Something to sell, I suppose; what it can be I am at a loss to understand.'

'I be glad to hear that your son Mr. Clym is coming home at Christmas, ma'am,' said Sam the turf-cutter. 'What a dog he used to be for bonfires!'

'Yes. I believe he is coming,' she said.

'He must be a fine fellow by this time?' said Fairway.

'He is a man now,' she replied quietly.

'Tis very lonesome for 'ee in the heth to-night, mis'ess,' said

Christian, coming from the seclusion he had hitherto maintained. 'Mind you don't get lost. Egdon Heath is a bad place to get lost in, and the winds do huffle queerer to-night than ever I heard 'em afore. Them that know Egdon best have been pixy-led here at times.'

'Is that you, Christian?' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'What made you hide away from me?'

'Twas that I didn't know 'ee in this light, mis'ess; and, being a man of the mournfullest make, I was scared a little, that's all. Oftentimes, if you could see how terrible down I get in my mind, 'twould make 'ee quite nervous for fear I should die by my hand.'

'You don't take after your father,' said Mrs. Yeobright, looking towards the fire, where Grandfer Cantle, with some want of originality, was dancing by himself among the sparks, as the others had done before.

'Now, Grandfer,' said Timothy Fairway, 'we are ashamed of 'ee. A reverent old patriarch man as you be—seventy if a day—to go hornpiping like that by yourself.'

'A harrowing old man, Mis'ess Yeobright,' said Christian despondingly. 'I wouldn't live with him a week, so playward as he is, if I could get away.'

'Twould be more seemly in 'ee to stand still and welcome Mis'ess Yeobright, and you the venerablest here, Grandfer Cantle,' said the besom-woman.

'Faith, and so it would,' said the reveller, checking himself repentantly. 'I've such a bad memory Mis'ess Yeobright, that I forget how I'm looked up to by the rest of 'em. My spirits must be wonderful good, you'll say? But not always. 'Tis a weight upon a man to be looked up to as commander, and I often feel it.'

'I am sorry to stop the talk,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'But I must be leaving you now. I am crossing the heath towards my niece's new home, who is returning to-night with her husband; and hearing Olly's voice I came up here to ask her if she would soon be going home; I should like her to walk with me, as her way is mine.'

'Ay, sure, I am just thinking of moving,' said Olly.

'Why, you'll be safe to meet the reddleman that I told 'ee of,' said Fairway. 'He's only gone back to get his van. We heard that your niece and her husband were coming straight home as soon as they were married, and we are going down there shortly, to give 'em a song o' welcome.'

'Thank you indeed,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'But we shall take a shorter cut through the furze than you can go with long clothes; so we won't trouble 'ee to wait, ma'am.'

'Very well—are you ready, Olly?'

'Yes, ma'am. And there's a light shining from your niece's window, see. It will help to keep us in the path.'

She indicated the faint light at the bottom of the valley which Fairway had pointed out; and the two women descended the barrow.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INNOCENT PERSON GREATLY WRONGED BY ACCIDENTS.

Down, downward they went, and yet further down—their descent at each step seeming to outmeasure their advance. Their skirts were scratched noisily by the furze, their shoulders brushed by the ferns, which, though dead and dry, stood erect as when alive, no sufficient winter weather having as yet arrived to beat them down. Their Tartarean situation might by some have been called an imprudent one for two unattended women. But these shaggy recesses were at all seasons a familiar surrounding to Olly and Mrs. Yeobright; and the addition of darkness lends no frightfulness to the face of a friend.

'And so Tamsin have married him at last,' said Olly, when the incline had become so much less steep that their footsteps no longer required undivided attention.

Mrs. Yeobright answered slowly, 'Yes: at last.'

'How you will miss her—living with 'ee as a daughter, as she always have.'

'I do miss her.'

Olly's mind was of that conformation which, while it left her without the tact to perceive when remarks were and were not timely, failed, from its very simplicity, to render them offensive. Questions that would have been resented in others she could ask with impunity. This accounted for Mrs. Yeobright's acquiescence in the revival of an evidently sore subject.

'I was quite strook to hear you'd agreed to it, ma'am, that I was,' continued the besom-maker.

'You were not more struck by it than I should have been last year this time, Olly. There are a good many sides to that wedding. I could not tell you all of them, even if I tried.'

'I feelled myself that he was hardly solid-going enough to mate with your family. Keeping an inn—what is it? But 'a's clever, that's true, and they say he was in higher life once, but have come down by being too outwardly given.'

'I saw that, upon the whole, it would be better she should marry where she wished.'

'Poor little thing, her feelings got the better of her, no doubt. 'Tis nater. Well, they may call him what they will—he've several acres of heth ground broke up here, besides the public-house, and the heth-croppers, and his manners be quite like a gentleman's. And what's done cannot be undone.'

'It cannot,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'See, here's the turnpike-road at last. Now we shall get along better.'

The wedding subject was no further dwelt upon; and soon a faint diverging path was reached, where they parted company, Olly first begging her companion to remind Mr. Wildeve that he had not sent her sick husband the bottle of wine promised on the occasion of his marriage. The besom-maker turned to the left towards her own house, behind a spur of the hill; and Mrs. Yeobright followed the straight road, which further on ran past the Quiet Woman Inn, whither she supposed her niece to have returned with Wildeve from their wedding at Southerton that day.

She first reached Wildeve's Patch, as it was called, a plot of lard redeemed from the heath, and after long and laborious years brought into cultivation. The man who had discovered that it could be broken up died of the labour: the man who succeeded him in possession ruined himself in fertilising it. Wildeve came like Amerigo Vespucci, and received the honours due to those who had gone before.

When Mrs. Yeobright had drawn near to the inn, and was about to enter, she saw a horse and vehicle some two hundred yards beyond it, coming towards her, a man walking alongside with a lantern in his hand. It was evident that this was the reddleman who had inquired for her. Instead of entering the inn at once, she walked by it and towards the van.

The conveyance came close, and the man was about to pass her with little notice, when she turned to him and said, 'I think you have been inquiring for me. I am Mrs. Yeobright of Blooms-End.'

The reddleman started, and held up his finger. He stopped the horses, and beckoned to her to withdraw with him a few yards aside, which she did, wondering.

'You don't know me, ma'am, I suppose?' he said.

'I do not,' said she.

'I have been about here before, and I knew your niece Miss Tamsin a little. I have something bad to tell you.'

'About her—no? She has just come home, I believe, with her husband. They arranged to return this afternoon—to the inn beyond here?'

'She's not there.'

‘How do you know?’

‘Because she’s here. She’s in my van,’ he added slowly.

‘What new trouble has come!’ murmured Mrs. Yeobright, putting her hand over her eyes.

‘I can’t explain much, ma’am. All I know is that, as I was going along the road this morning about a mile out of Southerton, I heard something trotting after me like a doe, and looking round there she was, white as death itself. “O Diggory Venn!” she said, “I thought ’twas you: will you help me?—I am in trouble.”’

‘How did she know your name?’ said Mrs. Yeobright doubtfully.

‘I had met her as a lad, before I took up with the trade. She asked then if she might ride, and then down she fell in a faint. I picked her up, and put her in, and there she has been ever since. She has cried a good deal, but she has hardly spoke; all she has told me being that she was to have been married this morning. I tried to get her to eat something, but she couldn’t; and at last she fell asleep.’

‘Let me see her at once,’ said Mrs. Yeobright, hastening towards the van.

The reddleman followed with the lantern, and stepping up first assisted Mrs. Yeobright to mount beside him. On the door being opened she perceived at the end of the van an extemporised couch, around which was hung apparently all the drapery that the reddleman possessed, to keep the occupant of the little couch from all contact with the red materials of his trade. A young girl lay thereon, covered with a cloak. She was asleep, and the light of the lantern fell upon her features.

It was a fair, sweet, and honest country face, reposing in a nest of wavy chestnut hair. It was between pretty and beautiful. Though her eyes were closed, one could easily imagine the light necessarily shining in them as the culmination of the luminous workmanship around. The groundwork of the face was hopefulness; but over it now lay like a foreign substance a film of anxiety and grief. The grief had been there so shortly as to have abstracted nothing of the bloom: it had as yet but given a dignity to what it might eventually undermine. The scarlet of her lips had not had time to abate, and just now it appeared still more intense by the absence of the neighbouring and more transient colour of her cheek. The lips frequently parted, with a murmur of words. She seemed to belong rightly to a madrigal—to require viewing through rhyme and harmony.

One thing at least was obvious: she was not made to be looked at thus. The reddleman had appeared conscious of as much, and, while

Mrs. Yeobright looked in upon her, he cast his eyes aside with a delicacy which well became him. It was as if the sleeper thought so too, for the next moment she opened her eyes.

The lips then parted with something of anticipation, something more of doubt; and her several thoughts, and fractions of thoughts, as signalled by the changes on her face during those first few instants, were exhibited by the light to the utmost nicety. An ingenuous transparent life was disclosed: it was as if the glow of her existence could be seen passing within. She understood the scene in a moment.

‘O yes, it is I, aunt,’ she said. ‘I know how frightened you are, and how you cannot believe it; but all the same, it is I who have come home like this.’

‘Tamsin, Tamsin!’ said Mrs. Yeobright, stooping over the young woman and kissing her. ‘O my dear girl!’

Thomasin was now on the verge of a sob; but by an unexpected self-command she uttered no sound. With a gentle panting breath she sat upright.

‘I did not expect to see you in this state, any more than you me,’ she went on quickly. ‘Where am I, aunt?’

‘Nearly home, my dear. In Egdon Bottom. What dreadful thing is it?’

‘I’ll tell you in a moment. So near, are we? Then I will get out and walk. I want to go home by the path.’

‘But this kind man who has done so much will, I am sure, take you right on to my house?’ said the aunt, turning to the reddleman, who had withdrawn from the front of the van on the awakening of the girl, and stood in the road.

‘Why should you think it necessary to ask me?—I will, of course,’ said he.

‘He is indeed kind,’ murmured Thomasin. ‘I was once a little acquainted with him, aunt, and when I saw him to-day I thought I should prefer his van to any conveyance of a stranger. But I’ll walk now. Reddleman, stop the horses, please.’

The man regarded her with tender reluctance, but stopped them.

Aunt and niece then descended from the van; Mrs. Yeobright saying to its owner, ‘I think, now, that I know your face: you formerly lived near here?’

‘I did,’ he said, and looked at Thomasin, who blushed a little. ‘Then you’ll not be wanting me any more to-night, ma’am?’

Mrs. Yeobright glanced around at the dark sky, at the hills, at the perishing bonfires, and at the lighted window of the inn *they had neared*. ‘I think not,’ she said, ‘since Thomasin wishes to

walk. We can soon run up the path and reach home : we know it well.'

And after a few further words they parted, the reddleman moving onwards with his van, and the two women remaining standing in the road. As soon as the vehicle and its driver had withdrawn so far as to be beyond all possible reach of her voice Mrs. Yeobright turned to her niece.

'Now, Thomasin,' she said sternly, 'what's the meaning of this disgraceful performance?'

(To be continued.)

A Thanksgiving.

My life had fainted : all my world was sad,
 For cruel Fate had dealt a coward's blow.
 Home had denied me peace, its accents glad
 Had turned to tears ; its sun was changed to snow !
 'Twas then I lifted up my broken voice,
 Crying in terror, ' Will this soul-pain cease ?'
 And as I paused, a whisper said, ' Rejoice !
 The end of sorrow to the sad is peace.'

I saw a vision of an island home
 Clasped in a love-embrace of soaring seas ;
 Fair children beckoned me to come and roam
 Among the flowered grass beneath the trees.
 Cowslips of gold and soft-eyed pimpernels,
 Sheets of wild hyacinth of heavenly blue,
 Shouted a welcome, and from daisy-dells
 Forgotten voices said, ' We wait for you.'

There is a corner on the isle I love,
 Dear by a thousand spring-time memories,
 Whose voice is tender as the coo of dove,
 And touch as soft as fleece of summer skies.
 Here, was the peace ! here the deep haven-rest !
 Here thankful, stretched upon the flow'r-starred sod,
 I drank new gratitude from Nature's breast,
 And breathed thanksgivings on the lap of God !

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

Living in Dread and Terror.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

I MAY as well say at the outset that I have no personal experiences to relate. Students of science may ere now have lived in dread and terror, though I know of no instances of the sort. Usually the life scientific is a life of peace and quiet, remote from war's alarms. Yet it is of Dread and Terror as the attendants of War that I am now to speak. For I cannot doubt that the excellent suggestion made by Mr. Madan of Eton, that the two moons of the War-planet should be called Deimus and Phobus (or Dread and Terror), will be adopted by astronomers, and the comparatively unmeaning names Romulus and Remus (suggested in an American journal) rejected in their favour. Every reader of the *Iliad* will remember the description, in the fifteenth book, of the wrath of Mars when his son Ascalaphus was slain. Forgive me, Gods, he says,

and yield my vengeance way:
Descending first to yon forbidden plain,
The God of Battles dares avenge the slain;
Dares, though the thunder bursting o'er my head
Should hurl me blazing on those heaps of dead.

With these rebellious words, he calls on his two satellites (or, according to others, his two sons) Deimus and Phobus:—

With that he gives command to Fear and Flight
To join his rapid coursers for the fight;
Then, grim in arms, with hasty vengeance flies—
Arms that reflect a radiance through the skies.

Or, as Homer more succinctly expresses his meaning: 'Thus spake he, and bade Fear and Flight his coursers yoke, while he donned his blazing panoply.'

Mr. Madan suggests, doubtless in jest, that the preparation of Ares to descend to the earth possibly refers to an unusually near approach of the planet at opposition. But the gods of the Homeric Olympus are not planets;¹ and we may be permitted to

¹ I myself once threw out the notion, however, that there was a reference to the immense superiority of Jupiter's mass in the well-known lines in which Zeus reminds the other deities how much stronger he is than they are. Remembering that Jupiter's mass would outweigh about two and a half times the combined mass of all the other planets, a fanciful imagination might find a reference to this relation in the words

regard this speculation as on the whole improbable; especially as what immediately follows is hardly consistent with any planetary interpretation. For Pallas snatches from Mars his shield and spear, and, taking off his helmet, addresses him in terms of strong reproach and menace, in such sort as not only to prevent his approaching the earth, but to cause Ares the Manslayer, Shaker of Cities, to sit in sullen gloom curbing the rising groan. The astronomer, then, can hardly encourage the hope that any nearer approach may be made to the date of the Trojan War by this reference to Mars, or accept quite unhesitatingly the belief that the prophetic genius of Homer has already not only identified but even given names to the two minute moons detected by Professor Asaph Hall last August (with a telescope which not ten such men as fought at Troy could have moved, but Hall or Newcomb now easily wields it in whatever direction they may desire). Yet, as Mr. Madan says, we must not lightly reject the authority of Homer, and the names *Deimus* and *Phobus*, or *Dread* and *Terror*, will most probably be accepted gladly by the astronomers of the Washington Observatory, with whom unquestionably rests the decision of this interesting question. Should other Martian satellites hereafter be detected, which seems not improbable, when we remember that other moons of the same order in point of size might readily have escaped detection even with the great 26-feet lens or with the mightiest mirrors yet made, it will not be difficult to find names

which are rendered (considerably 'translated' in the sense in which Quince used the words) by Pope:—

'League all your forces then, ye powers above,
Join all and try th' omnipotence of Jove;
Let down our golden everlasting chain,
Whose strong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main:'

(what can this be but universal gravitation?)

'Strive all, of mortal and immortal birth,
To drag by this the Thunderer down to earth:
Ye strive in vain! If I but stretch this hand,
I heave the gods, the ocean, and the land;
I fix the chain to great Olympus' height,
And the vast world hangs trembling in my sight!'

I remarked on this, in Part A of the appendix to my '*Saturn and its System*,' that possibly some tradition of the vastness of Jupiter's bulk, ascertained perhaps by Chaldean astronomers, may have been embodied by Homer in the above passage, or rather in the Greek original, which differs considerably in places from Pope's rendering. 'The image employed seems singularly infelicitous,' I wrote, 'unless interpreted in some such way'—an explanation which 'appears more natural than that commonly offered, which refers the image to subtle dogmas of physical influences and powers, associating together the various parts of the universe.' I must confess, however, I do not now see this quite so clearly as I did, or thought I did, when I wrote the above remarks.

for them. Our poet Gray, following Homer in assigning as a warrior's attendants Dread and Terror (regarding Dread as the sentiment of fear, and Terror as its outward expression, so that Amazement and Flight become no unsatisfactory synonyms), gives us Solitude and Sorrow for followers, in the familiar lines—

Amazement in his van with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind.

Fainter and probably smaller moons of Mars may have these names, and if yet others should be detected, the melancholy train may be further increased without difficulty. If Romulus and Remus were selected, a difficulty would arise in assigning names to other Martian moons, for we do not know of any brothers which these twins had (though they had half-brothers in plenty). Besides, they were twins, and their names would suit only a binary system, not two moons travelling on different orbits and in widely different periods. (Romulus and Remus were in the strictest sense men of the same period, though Romulus flourished later than Remus for a very sufficient reason.)

It is, then, of life in the moons of Mars that I propose to speak. The subject is one with which I feel particularly free to deal, simply because I know nothing whatever of life in these moons, and where we know nothing surmise is free from restraint. It is indeed only where we know nothing that the old proverb 'Thought is free' is true, as all proverbs should be.

I feel a little difficulty, nevertheless, at the outset, in determining what sort of life I shall consider in these Martian moons. I do not mean that I am in doubt whether animal or vegetable life, or both forms of life, are best suited to these bodies, or whether in considering animal life I shall take it for granted that some animals there possess intelligence resembling that of man. I am quite decided on these points. It seems to me, indeed, that there is very little interest in the inquiry whether vegetables or brute animals exist anywhere else in the universe save in our own earth. The mere repetition in unnumbered worlds of the forms of a vegetable and animal life (other than man) existing on this earth, seems to me a matter of no greater moment than the multiplication of worlds like our earth, or systems like our solar system, of galaxies like the universe of suns of which our sun is a member. Granting only such kinds of life elsewhere, we might use a formula somewhat resembling one used by an eminent American divine at an inaugural meeting held in New York before I gave my first series of lectures there. The poet Bryant had spoken of the wealth of worlds throughout the universe, their

stately motions, the splendour and the multitude of suns, the glories, in fine, of the universe of worlds and suns. Presently Dr. Hitchcock arose and said that, while recognising the vastness of creation in these respects, he felt that a universe not 'informed with life' taught only, however splendid it might be, however noble its proportions, however grand its movements, the unimpressive doctrine that 'Dirt is cheap.' Regarding dirt—not, after Palmerston's definition, as matter in the wrong place—but as representing mere inert matter, the saying is just, and may be justly matched by the saying, 'Brute life is cheap,' if we assume that such life is common to all or most of the worlds which people space; and remembering what brute life really is, how it is only maintained by constant death, and ends in death even when so maintained, may we not fairly substitute for the 'Brute life is cheap,' the formula 'Death is cheap'? Unquestionably dirt is cheap throughout the universe, and if the general theory of the plurality of worlds is accepted, assuredly death also is cheap. In the mere existence of life no greater interest can rationally be taken than in the motions, shape, qualities, and so forth, of inert masses. Each subject alike interests rather as affording scope for human intelligence; but even in that respect such subjects derive no small proportion of their interest from their relation to the possible existence of intelligent beings in the worlds whose masses, motions, physical properties and so forth, the intelligence of man has enabled him in some degree to determine.

It is not, therefore, in this respect that I am in any doubt. I decide unhesitatingly to consider the circumstances under which beings possessing intelligence like ours would find themselves placed in such abodes as the moons of Mars. But I feel in some degree of doubt as to the bodily attributes to be assigned to such beings. The consideration of the cause of my difficulty in this respect will introduce us conveniently to some of the general relations involved in our subject.

I entertain, for my own part, the conviction that the outer moon of Mars cannot be much more than ten miles in diameter, nor the inner moon much more than fifteen miles. The opinion is founded on the apparent lustre of these two objects, for no attempt to measure them will be made until telescopes many times more powerful than any now in existence shall have been constructed. In passing I may remark that a statement made in a scientific weekly to the effect that the great Parsonstown reflector could have been employed on a special occasion to measure the satellites has been misinterpreted by persons not familiar with the technical terms in use among astronomers. By measuring the satellites the

observers who used the expression meant only measuring the apparent distance of the satellites from Mars, and their apparent position with respect to him, not measuring their dimensions. I doubt if we shall know anything on this point for many years to come, if even for many centuries. But we can form a fair estimate of their size from the quantity of light we receive from them. I will not here run through the calculation by which I first showed that the outermost moon cannot probably exceed ten miles in diameter. It is contained in an article which I wrote for the 'Spectator' (September 1), and is given more fully in an essay of mine which appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine' for September. It was confirmed, within a week or so, by the news that Professor Newcomb of the Washington Observatory considered the diameter of the outer satellite cannot greatly exceed ten miles, and may be less. The only reason for doubting this conclusion is that Mr. Wentworth Erck of Sherrington Bray has seen the satellite with a telescope only seven inches in aperture—a wonderful feat of eyesight. It would have led to the suggestion that a faint star had been mistaken for the satellite but that the correct place and change of place were given by Mr. Erck. However, I am disposed to regard the achievement as altogether exceptional, and affording (in the presence of the failure of other observers with tenfold greater illuminating power) no better reason for regarding the moons of Mars as within the range of such telescopes, than the success of Mr. Ward of Belfast in seeing two of the Uranian satellites with four inches only of aperture affords for believing that they can ordinarily be seen with anything like that telescopic power.

However, let us assign to both the moons a diameter of about 20 miles, which (not to trouble the reader with exact calculations) we shall regard according to convenience as equivalent to the 400th part of our earth's diameter, or the 100th part of the moon's diameter. Thus the moons of Mars would have a surface equal to the 160,000th of the earth's, or the 10,000th of the moon's, and a volume equal to the 64,000,000th of the earth's, or the 1,000,000th of the moon's. As to their mass we are driven again to a mere assumption, for we know nothing of the density of these moons. We may fairly assume that their substance is not so compact as our earth's, for we know that our own moon and the moons of Jupiter are of smaller mean density than the earth. The reason of this is presumably that owing to the relatively smaller quantity of matter in our moon and Jupiter's moons as compared with the earth, the matter is not so forcibly compressed by gravity. We might even assume on this account that the moons of Mars were

much less densely compacted even than our own moon; but we must remember, on the other side, the possibility that both moons might be masses of meteoric metal. I do not myself regard this as at all probable. I feel satisfied, from the known facts respecting meteors, that none of them travel as metallic masses in space, although, after the changes they undergo in their rush through our air, metallic masses only may often remain as visible evidence of their visit. But the possibility must be taken into account. I think the assumption that these moons have a mean density not exceeding our moon's will be regarded as a fair one.

Now, on this assumption, it will follow, according to a well-known law, that the attraction of gravity at the surface of one of these moons will be less than the attraction at our moon's surface, in the same degree that the diameter of a Martian moon falls short of our moon's diameter. It will therefore be only one hundredth part of the attraction at our moon's surface, or about one six-hundredth part of our familiar terrestrial gravity. So that if a man 10st. 10lbs. (or 150 lbs.) in weight were placed on the surface of one of these moons he would weigh only a quarter of a pound (so that if he were, as Sydney Smith said of Macaulay, 'a book in breeches,' he could be forwarded by book-post for a penny, assuming size to be no objection).

It is here that my difficulty comes in. If I assume the intelligent beings inhabiting the moons of Mars to be shaped like men and of the same size, while circumstances are so arranged that in nervous and muscular energy they are not inferior to us, then their home would be inconveniently small for them, because of their amazing activity. For with the same muscular power and size as at present, but weight reduced to a six-hundredth part, or to a few ounces, an active man could leap to a height of about 3,000 feet, or to a distance of 12,000 feet; that is, to a height of more than half a mile, and to a distance of more than two miles.

Here I have simply multiplied the greatest height and the greatest distance which an exceptionally active men can jump, by 600. But there is another way of considering the high jump, and to some degree the long jump also,—because in taking a long jump a man must give a certain vertical impulse to his body as well as the horizontal impulse which gives range to his leap. When a man jumps to a height of $5\frac{1}{4}$ feet, he gives to his body a vertical velocity upwards equivalent to that with which a body reaches the ground after falling through about 4 feet (not $5\frac{1}{4}$, because part of the range in height is due to the drawing up of the lower limbs; in fact, I question whether the best jumpers raise the centre of gravity of the body by so much as 4 feet, even in taking an upward leap of $5\frac{3}{4}$ or

continued his westward journey, but about to rise for his fellow-residents in the Martian moon. So that if he rested at the end of his long journey, the sun which during the latter portion of it had passed from the western horizon athwart the sky to the eastern, would, after the athlete stopped, rise from the eastern horizon and pass back again to the western. Thus he would have, during and after the latter part of his journey, two days in succession, one day reversed as he ran westwards, the other the natural day of the Martian moon. If, on the contrary, he started at sunset, he would begin his journey with a reversed day, and close it with a reversed night, followed by an ordinary night, during which he might rest. It would also be easy for him so to arrange matters, by running alternately east and west, as to have daylight throughout his journey, though to Martian lunarians at rest four days and four nights would have passed.

But a world admitting of such vagaries as these is not to be readily accepted as a reasonable or probable world. On the other hand, if we assign to the inhabitants of Martian moons proportions which would prevent their leaping to such enormous heights and over such enormous distances, or rather to heights and over distances so many times exceeding their own height, we find ourselves surrounded by perplexities not a whit less confounding than those just considered.

It is easy to determine how large a man should be, in order that on the surface of a planet whose gravity is known he might be as agile as a man on our earth. For this purpose we must compare, first, the relative activity of two men of unequal size but similarly proportioned. When I speak of activity here I mean the relation between the strength of the limbs and the weight of the body, regarding two men as equally active if the strength of the heavier exceeds that of the lighter in the same degree that the weight of the former exceeds that of the latter. Now compare two men in these respects whose heights are five feet and six feet respectively, their proportions being in all respects similar. The strength of muscles depends on the size of their cross-sections, and these are not proportioned to the height but to the square of the height. Thus the muscular power of the larger man is to that of the smaller, not as 6 to 5, but as 36 to 25, or exceeds that of the shorter man in a much greater degree than the height does. But the weight of the larger man exceeds that of the smaller in a yet greater degree, being greater, not as 6 to 5, or as 36 to 25, but as 216 to 125, or very nearly double. His muscular power being greater only in the proportion of 36 to 25, whereas it should be greater in the proportion of 216 to 125, is less effective to support the weight in the

proportion of 5 to 6. We see this at once, because if it were increased as 6 to 5, it would be greater than that of the smaller man as 36 times 6 or 216 is greater than 25 times 5 or 125—that is, in the same degree as the weight is greater. Since then the strength of the taller man should be increased as 6 to 5, to make his activity equal to that of the smaller, it is in reality too small in the proportion of 5 to 6. In other words, the smaller man is more active than the larger in the same degree that the larger is taller than the smaller. But if the larger lived in a world where gravity was only five-sixths of terrestrial gravity, he would be as active in that world as the smaller man in *his* world. The taller man, then, wants a world where gravity is less in the same degree; and conversely, in a world where gravity is less, men can be larger in the same degree, yet remain equally active as we are in ours. Applying this reasoning to either of the moons of Mars whose gravity we have assumed equal to a six hundredth only of terrestrial gravity, we arrive at the stupendous—the appalling—result, that men there might be six hundred times as tall as terrestrial men, yet equally active. The same reasoning applies to animals, and the idea of an elephant or a giraffe six hundred times as tall as terrestrial specimens of these animals is dreadful indeed. But let us content ourselves with considering human beings only. The Brobdingnags of Swift sink into utter insignificance beside giants 1,200 yards high. The average height of a Brobdingnag was about 20 yards, or ten times the height of ordinary men. So that the inhabitants of a Martian moon, on the assumption we have been dealing with, would exceed a Brobdingnag sixty times in height, or six times more than a Brobdingnag exceeded Gulliver, or than Gulliver exceeded the King of Lilliput in height. Amongst the Martian lunarians a Brobdingnag would be almost as utterly insignificant as a Lilliputian among Brobdingnags.

But this arrangement, though reducing the Martian lunarians to a reasonable degree of activity, so that the most agile among them would only be able to leap to about his own height, or over a distance exceeding his own height about fourfold, only increases our difficulties. The rate at which these monsters would travel, supposing they used as much exertion as terrestrial men in walking and running, would in fact be much greater,—for while every step would be six hundred times as long as before, the giant would not be six hundred times as long making each step, as we before supposed. What time he would actually require I do not know, having had no experience of the habitudes of human bodies 1,200 yards high. We cannot suppose he would take a step in the same time as a man on this earth, simply because the nervous

system would require a considerable time in conveying sensations to the monster's brain—about half a minute, for example, in conveying intelligence from the foot to the brain. But doubtless each step would take much less than six hundred times the interval required for terrestrial steps. So that the pace at which these giants would travel would far exceed that at which the smaller lunarians we before considered would advance. Each giant would also require much more room for himself in taking his journeys; and in fact the small moons of Mars would be utterly unfit abodes for such creatures. One circumstance alone, among many suggested in the preceding inquiry, will show how utterly uncomfortable the relations of such a world would be. Sensation requiring half a minute to travel from the foot to the brain of one of the giant inhabitants, it follows that some one might deal a blow at his enemy's foot, and have a clear start of one minute before the giant could pursue him,—half a minute passing before the wounded giant knew he was hurt, and another half a minute before he could set his feet in motion to pursue his foe.

Probably the most convenient assumption we can make, under these circumstances, is that there may be creatures in a general respect like ourselves on these moons of Mars, but that, owing to the extreme rarity of the atmosphere, their vital energy is so far reduced that they are not more active than we are, despite the feeble action of gravity in their world. The air must be exceedingly rare, most certainly, even if the quantity is proportioned to the volumes of these moons. On this assumption the quantity of air is less than the quantity of terrestrial air as one is less than 400 times 400 times 400,—that is, amounts only to one sixty-four millionth part of the terrestrial air. Being spread over a surface which is but one 160,000th of the earth's, it follows that the quantity of air above each square mile of surface is one 400th part only of the quantity over each square mile of our earth's surface. This would be little enough in all conscience; but this is not all. For the action of gravity being, according to our assumption, only one 600th of terrestrial gravity, it follows that the atmospheric pressure and therefore density is further reduced in this degree, giving finally a density equal only to one 240,000th of the density of our own air. Now at a height of seven miles, where the atmospheric pressure is reduced to one-fourth that at the sea level, men of ordinary constitution would perish in a few minutes, if not instantly. In Coxwell's ascent to nearly that height, Glaisher fainted, and Coxwell only just had strength left to draw the valve-string with his teeth (his hands being already powerless). Yet at a height of seven miles, the density of the air is 60,000 times

greater than that which, according to our very reasonable assumption, prevails at the surface of the Martian moons. We can very well believe, then, that, in whatever way the inhabitants of these moons may be adapted, corporeally and constitutionally, for existence in their small homes, the rarity of the air there must tend to reduce their vital energy. So that we may well imagine that instead of being able to leap to a height of half a mile, or over a distance of two or three miles, they are not more active than we are on earth with six hundred times greater weight, but a far more effective respiration.

We might perhaps go even farther than this, and assume that, in order to give to the inhabitants of these moons locomotive powers proportioned in the same way to their own dimensions as ours are, they must be supposed very much smaller than we are. We might imagine them in an atmosphere so exceedingly attenuated that creatures which could have vitality enough to move freely about must be no larger than flies or ants, and must have also some such provision as insects have for more effective respiration. In this way we might find in the Martian moons a miniature of our own earth, not only in the proportions of these worlds themselves, their lands and seas and atmospheres, but also in those of the creatures living upon them. But it would not be very interesting to consider mere miniatures of our earth such as the moons of Mars would thus come to be regarded. Indeed, in that case, little more could be said than that all the relations presented by this earth were, or might be, represented in the Martian moons, but on a greatly reduced scale.

It will be much more interesting to imagine beings like ourselves, except in the possession of respiratory organs enabling them to live in an exceedingly rare atmosphere, and also in possessing only so much vital energy as enables them, though only weighing a few ounces, to travel about as actively in their home as we do in ours.

We may then try to picture to ourselves our condition if we lived in a world twenty miles in diameter, and situated like either of the moons of Mars.

Such a world would have a surface of about 1,260 square miles, about the area of Suffolk. As has been pointed out in a very suggestive and interesting article in the '*Spectator*' for September 14, a certain allowance must be made for seas. Let us assign to water one half of the surface, so that there are 630 square miles of water surface and as many of land. Thus the water surface would be equal to about four times that of Lake Neagh, the land surface to about that of Hertfordshire. Whether we ought to regard any por-

tions around the poles as uninhabitable by reason of excessive cold may be questioned. For, as was pointed out in the same essay, the smallness of the moon-world's surface could hardly fail to have its effect in rendering the climate more uniform than it would otherwise be. If we imagine arctic and antarctic snows around the northern and southern poles, then, as little more than thirty miles separate the poles, and perhaps only twenty miles would intervene between the outer edges of the snow regions, the state of things would correspond to the existence of two very large ice-houses (shielded carefully from the sun) at a distance of about thirty miles from each other in some well-watered country in our temperate zones. As we know that artificial measures would be necessary to prevent the ice so collected from melting entirely away in the course of time, we can hardly suppose that ice and snow can have gathered in the imagined circumstances around the poles of the two Martian moons. However, we may well suppose that the polar regions would not be very comfortable places to live in. Probably the inhabitable area of each moon is reduced by some eighty or a hundred square miles in this way.

But the smallness of these moons would render the temperature much more uniform. I fear the rarity of the air introduces here a difficulty which if we were to attend closely to it would compel us to abandon altogether the idea that the kind of life we have been imagining exists at all in these moons. At any rate we could only get over the difficulty, I think, by assuming that some peculiarity of bodily structure and of constitution enabled the human inhabitants of these worlds to endure an intensity of cold which *we* should find as quickly fatal as the small atmospheric density. Let us pass over this difficulty, however, and suppose that, utterly different as the mean temperature must be from that of our earth, the varieties of temperature in different latitudes and in different seasons correspond, as on our earth, with the varying solar elevation.

A degree of longitude at the equator would correspond to a distance of about one-sixth of a mile, instead of some 69 miles as on our earth. So that, as fifteen degrees or $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles would correspond with a time difference of one hour, it would be very easy for an inhabitant by walking westwards to make the sun seem always in the same part of the sky. Say, for instance, it was noon, and therefore the sun due south. Then if he walked at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles westwards along the equator it would remain noon just as long as he chose to continue his journey. A walker as good as Weston could quite easily keep the sun within a few degrees of south for a week or a month at a time. If he walked at the rate of 5 miles an hour westwards the sun would seem to go backwards,

or towards the east, and at the end of two hours, supposing it had been due south when he began, would have passed backwards by two hours' motion or fifteen degrees. Then he might rest for four hours, finding the sun two hours' motion west of south. Two hours' walking would bring the sun back to the south, two hours more would bring the sun an hour's motion east of south; and then he could rest again for four hours. Walking thus half the time, in spells of four hours, with four hours' rest between them, he would keep the sun always within two hours' motion on either side of due south—or, in other words, it would be always between ten in the morning and two in the afternoon with him.

In a latitude corresponding to that of London the task would be much easier, for the distance to be travelled per day would be reduced from about 63 miles to less than 40 miles.

Travelling eastwards, the sun's motion would be hastened instead of retarded or reversed. If, for instance, a traveller at the equator walked eastwards at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, the sun's apparent westwardly motion would be doubled, and daylight would last only about six hours, night the same, if he continued walking at this rate from one morning to the next, or for twelve hours. If he walked at the rate of 5 miles an hour, day would last only four hours, and the interval from dawn to dawn only eight.

Means of locomotion such as we have on earth would produce still more remarkable changes; but I need not consider them. The reader will have no difficulty in perceiving what their general nature would be. It would be quite easy, in certain latitudes, to reduce the day to a single hour either by swift journeying eastwards or by swift journeying westwards. In the former case the sun would rise in the east and set in the west. In the latter it would rise in the west and set in the east, and he would require to travel somewhat more quickly than in the former case. It is not easy to see, however, how any form of steam mechanism could be devised, where atmospheric pressure would be so small. Water would evaporate at a very low temperature indeed.

But the most remarkable effects which change of place by ordinary methods of locomotion would produce are those due to journeys north and south. As the writer of the interesting article in the '*Spectator*' already referred to has pointed out, 'in a 3-mile walk the inhabitant of one of these moons might change his climate as vastly as an inhabitant of our earth who has sailed from London to Alexandria. In other words, the same change which can only be obtained in the same distance on our earth by climbing a high mountain, could be obtained by an easy walk on the surface of the Martian moon; while a railway journey of the same distance

The Duel in Herne Wood.

EXTRACTED, WITH PERMISSION, FROM 'THE CASE OF
MR. LIONEL VARLEIGH.'

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

THE TELEGRAM.

*John Eyne, managing clerk, Maplesworth, to Messrs. Betsir and
Tarland, solicitors, London.*

By the end of the week shall forward evidence for defence, reduced to written form by witnesses themselves, as instructed by our client. Result of this method of proceeding just what I expected it would be. Nine-tenths of testimony, legally speaking, useless. May, I think, be relied on as true. Points, here and there, which suggest a new line of defence. Ample time for consultation. Coroner's inquest adjourned for a week.

THE EVIDENCE.

No. 1.—*Miss Bertha Duval, of Nettlegrove Hall, writes and says :—*

I.

Towards the middle of June in the present year—I mean the year 1817—I went to take the waters at Maplesworth, in Derbyshire, accompanied by my nearest living relative, my aunt.

The events which I have (most unwillingly) undertaken to relate are in some degree associated with my peculiar position in the world. I hope I shall be excused on this account if I begin by saying a few words about myself. I have not the vanity to suppose that the story of my life is likely to interest anybody; I am only anxious to explain (if I can) some parts of my conduct which might otherwise appear blameworthy in the eyes of strangers.

I was twenty-one years old at my last birthday. On coming of age I inherited a house and lands in Derbyshire, together with a fortune in money of one hundred thousand pounds. The only education which I have received has been obtained, with the help of masters, within the last two or three years of my life; and I

ve thus far seen nothing of society, in England or in any other civilised part of the world.

Taking it all together, this is surely a trying situation for a young woman of my age. To my mind it seems to excuse many mistakes which I might never have committed under more favourable circumstances.

I am an only child. My father was a French colonist in the land of Saint Domingo. He died while I was very young; leaving my mother and to me just enough to live on, in the remote part of the island in which our little property was situated. My mother was an Englishwoman. Her delicate health made it necessary for her to leave me for many hours of the day under the care of our household slaves. I can never forget their kindness to me; but, unfortunately, their ignorance equalled their kindness. If we had been rich enough to send to France or England for a competent governess we might have done very well. But we were not rich enough. I am ashamed to say that I was nearly thirteen years old before I had learnt to read and write correctly.

Four more years passed—and then there came a wonderful event in our lives, which was nothing less than the change from Saint Domingo to England.

My mother was distantly related to an ancient and wealthy English family. She seriously offended these proud people by marrying an obscure foreigner who had nothing to live on but his morsel of land in the West Indies. Having no expectations from her relatives, my mother preferred happiness with the man she loved to every other consideration; and I, for one, think she was right. From that moment she was cast off by the head of the family. For eighteen years of her life, as wife, mother, and widow, no letters came to her from her English home. We had just celebrated my seventeenth birthday when the first letter came. It informed my mother that no less than three lives, which stood between her and the inheritance of certain portions of the family property, had been swept away by death. The estate and the fortune which I have already mentioned had fallen to her in due course of the law, and her surviving relatives were magnanimously ready to forgive her at last!

We wound up our affairs at Saint Domingo, and we went to England to take possession of our new wealth.

At first the return to her native air seemed to have a beneficial effect on my mother's health. But it was a temporary improvement only. Her constitution had been fatally injured by the West Indian climate, and just as we had engaged a competent person to look after my neglected education, my constant attendance was

needed at my mother's bedside. We loved each other dearly, and we wanted no strange nurses to come between us. My aunt (my mother's sister) relieved me of my cares in the intervals when I wanted rest. For seven sad months our dear sufferer lingered. My useless tears fall on the paper when I write about this time of my life. I have only one remembrance to comfort me; my mother's last kiss was mine—she died peacefully with her head on my bosom.

I was nearly nineteen years old before I had sufficiently rallied my courage to be able to think seriously of myself and my prospects.

At that age one does not willingly submit oneself for the first time to the authority of a governess. Having my aunt for a companion and protectress, I proposed to engage my own masters and to superintend my own education.

My plans failed to meet with the approval of the head of the family. He declared (most unjustly, as the event proved) that my aunt was not a fit person to take care of me. She had passed all the later years of her life in retirement. A good creature, he admitted, in her own way, but she had no knowledge of the world and no firmness of character. The right person to act as my chaperon, and to superintend my education, was the high-minded and accomplished woman who had taught his own daughters. She was then disengaged, and, if I would follow his advice, I should do well to write to her while her services were still at my disposal.

I declined, with all needful gratitude and respect, to take his advice. The bare idea of living with a stranger so soon after my mother's death revolted me. Besides, I liked my aunt, and my aunt liked me. Being made acquainted with my decision, the head of the family cast me off, exactly as he had cast off my mother before me. He even declined to exercise his authority as my guardian. I was made a ward in Chancery until I came of age; and I found the Lord Chancellor, in my rare interviews with him, a nice old gentleman, who patted me on the cheek and said I reminded him of one of his own daughters.

So I lived in retirement with my good aunt, and studied industriously to improve my mind until my twenty-first birthday came. I was now an heiress, privileged to think and act for myself; and the Lord Chancellor and I shook hands with many friendly wishes at parting. My aunt kissed me tenderly. We talked of my poor mother, and we cried in each other's arms on the memorable day which made a wealthy woman of me. In a little time more, other troubles than vain regrets for the dead

were to try me, and other tears were to fill my eyes than the tears which I had given to the memory of my mother.

II.

Having said what I can for myself, I may now return to my visit, in June 1817, to the healing springs at Maplesworth.

This famous inland watering-place was only between nine and ten miles from my new home called Nettlegrove Hall. I had been feeling weak and out of spirits for some months, and our medical adviser recommended change of scene and a trial of the waters at Maplesworth. My aunt and I established ourselves in comfortable apartments, with a letter of introduction to the chief doctor in the place. This otherwise harmless and worthy man proved, strangely enough, to be the innocent cause of the trials and troubles which beset me at the outset of my new life.

The day after we had presented our letter of introduction we met the doctor on the public walk. He was accompanied by two strangers, both young men, and both (so far as my ignorant opinion went) persons of some distinction, judging by their dress and manners. The doctor said a few kind words to us, and rejoined his two companions. Both the gentlemen looked at me, and both took off their hats as my aunt and I proceeded on our walk.

I own I thought occasionally of the well-bred strangers during the rest of the day, especially of the shortest of the two, who was also the handsomest of the two to my thinking. If this confession seems rather a bold one, remember, if you please, that I had never been taught to conceal my feelings at Saint Domingo, and that the events which followed our arrival in England had kept me completely secluded from the society of other young ladies of my age.

The next day, while I was drinking my glass of healing water (extremely nasty water, by the way), the doctor joined us. While he was asking me about my health, the two strangers made their appearance again and took off their hats again. They both looked expectantly at the doctor, and the doctor (in performance of a promise which he had already made, as I privately suspected) formally introduced them to my aunt and to me. First (I put the handsomest man first) Captain Arthur Stanwick, of the army, home from India on leave, and staying at Maplesworth to take the waters; secondly, Mr. Lionel Varleigh, of Boston, in America, visiting England, after travelling all over Europe, and stopping at Maplesworth to keep company with his friend the Captain.

On their introduction, the two gentlemen, observing, no doubt, that I was a little shy, forbore delicately from pressing their society on us.

Captain Stanwick, with a beautiful smile, and with teeth worthy of the smile, stroked his whiskers, and asked me if I had found any benefit from taking the waters. He afterwards spoke in great praise of the charming scenery in the neighbourhood of Maplesworth, and then turning away addressed his next words to my aunt. Mr. Varleigh, taking his place, speaking with perfect gravity, and with no whiskers to stroke, said, 'I have once tried the waters here out of curiosity. I can sympathise, Miss, with the expression which I observed on your face when you emptied your glass just now. Permit me to offer you something nice to take the taste of the waters out of your mouth.' He produced from his pocket a beautiful little box filled with sugar-plums. 'I bought it in Paris,' he explained. 'Having lived a good deal in France, I have got into a habit of making little presents of this sort to ladies and children. I wouldn't let the doctor see it, Miss, if I were you. He has the usual medical prejudice against sugar-plums.' With that quaint warning he, too, made his bow and discreetly withdrew.

Thinking it over afterwards, I acknowledged to myself that the English Captain—although he was the handsomest man of the two, and possessed the smoothest manners—had failed, nevertheless, to overcome my shyness. The American traveller's unaffected sincerity and good humour, on the other hand, set me quite at my ease. I could look at him and thank him, and feel amused at his sympathy with the grimace I had made, after swallowing the ill-flavoured waters. And yet, while I lay awake at night, wondering whether we should meet our new acquaintances on the next day, it was the English Captain that I most wanted to see again, and not the American traveller! At the time I set this down to nothing more important than my own perversity. Ah, dear! dear! I know better than that now.

The next morning brought the doctor to our hotel on a special visit to my aunt. He invented a pretext for sending me into the next room, which was so plainly a clumsy excuse, that my curiosity was aroused. I gratified my curiosity. Must I make my confession plainer still? Must I acknowledge that I was mean enough to listen on the other side of the door?

I heard my dear innocent old aunt say, 'Doctor! I hope you don't see anything alarming in the state of Bertha's health?'

The doctor burst out laughing. 'My dear Madam! there is *nothing* in the state of the young lady's health which need cause

the smallest anxiety to you or to me. The object of my visit is to justify myself for presenting those two gentlemen to you yesterday. They are both greatly struck by Miss Bertha's beauty, and they both urgently entreated me to introduce them. Such introductions, I need hardly say, are marked exceptions to my general rule. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I should have said No. In the cases of Captain Stanwick and Mr. Varleigh, however, I saw no reason to hesitate. Permit me to assure you that I am not intruding on your notice two fortune-hunting adventurers. They are both men of position and men of property. The family of the Stanwicks has been well known to me for years; and Mr. Varleigh brought me a letter from my oldest living friend, answering for him as a gentleman in the highest sense of the word. He is the wealthiest man of the two; and it speaks volumes for him, in my opinion, that he has preserved his simplicity of character after a long residence in such places as Paris and Vienna. Captain Stanwick has more polish and ease of manner, but, looking under the surface, I rather fancy there may be something a little impetuous and domineering in his temper. However, we all have our faults. I can only say, for both these young friends of mine, that you need feel no scruple about admitting them to your intimacy, if they happen to please you. And, if by any possible chance your charming niece should look on either of them, in course of time, with favouring eyes, I may venture to say—marriage being, sooner or later, the destiny of all charming young ladies—that her guardians and friends will not find that she has chosen unwisely. It is a habit of mine, my dear Madam, to speak plainly on these social subjects, and to look all possible eventualities in the face. And now that I have spoken my mind, and removed any doubts which may have troubled you, suppose we release Miss Bertha from her exile, and discuss the interesting subject of your plans for the day.'

The smoothly eloquent doctor paused for the moment, and I darted away from the door.

Our plans for the day included a drive through the famous scenery near the town. My two admirers met us on horseback. Here, again, the Captain had the advantage over his friend. His seat in the saddle and his riding-dress were both perfect things in their way. The Englishman rode on one side of the carriage and the American on the other. They both talked well, but Mr. Varleigh had seen more of the world in general than Captain Stanwick, and he made himself certainly the most interesting and most amusing companion of the two. On our way back my admiration was excited by a thick wood, beautifully situated

on rising ground at a little distance from the high road. 'Oh, dear,' I said, 'how I should like to take a walk in that wood!' Idle, thoughtless words; but, oh, what remembrances crowd on me as I think of them now!

Captain Stanwick and Mr. Varleigh at once dismounted and offered themselves as my escort. The coachman warned them to be careful; people had often lost themselves, he said, in that wood. I asked the name of it. The name was Herne Wood. My aunt was not very willing to leave her comfortable seat in the carriage, but it ended in her going with us.

Before we entered the wood, Mr. Varleigh noted the position of the high road by his pocket-compass. Captain Stanwick laughed at him, and offered me his arm. Ignorant as I was of the ways of the world and the rules of coquetry, my instinct (I suppose) warned me not to distinguish one of the gentlemen too readily at the expense of the other. I took my aunt's arm and settled it in that way.

A winding path led us into the wood. On a nearer view, the place disappointed me; the farther we advanced, the more horribly gloomy it grew. The thickly-growing trees shut out the light; the damp stole over me little by little until I shivered; the undergrowth of bushes and thickets rustled at intervals mysteriously, as some invisible creeping creature passed through it. At a turn in the path we reached a sort of clearing, and saw the sky and the sunshine once more. But, even here, a disagreeable incident occurred. A snake wound his undulating way across the open space, passing close by me, and I was fool enough to scream. The Captain killed the creature with his riding-cane, taking a pleasure in doing it which I did not like to see. We left the clearing and tried another path, and then another. And still the horrid wood preyed on my spirits. I agreed with my aunt that we should do well to return to the carriage. On our way back we missed the right path, and lost ourselves for the moment. Mr. Varleigh consulted his compass, and pointed in one direction. Captain Stanwick, consulting nothing but his own jealous humour, pointed in the other. We followed Mr. Varleigh's guidance, and got back to the clearing. He turned to the Captain, and said good-humouredly, 'You see the compass was right.' Captain Stanwick answered sharply, 'There are more ways than one out of an English wood; you talk as if we were on an American prairie.' Mr. Varleigh seemed to be at a loss to understand his rudeness: there was a pause. The two men looked at each other, standing face to face on the brown earth of the clearing—the Englishman's ruddy countenance, light auburn hair and

whiskers, and well-opened bold blue eyes, contrasting with the pale complexion, the keenly-observant look, the dark, closely-cut hair, and the delicately-lined face of the American. It was only for a moment: I had barely time to feel uneasy before they controlled themselves and led us back to the carriage, talking as pleasantly as if nothing had happened. For days afterwards, nevertheless, that scene in the clearing—the faces and figures of the two men, the dark line of trees hemming them in on all sides, the brown circular patch of ground on which they stood—haunted my memory, and got in the way of my brighter and happier thoughts. When my aunt inquired if I had enjoyed the day, I surprised her by saying, No. And when she asked why, I could only answer, ‘It was all spoilt by Herne Wood.’

III.

Three weeks passed.

To write the true history of that short lapse of time is to write the humiliating confession of my own folly. I am ready to make the confession, if it would only stop there. But the narrative of the consequences that followed must come next, and I have not courage enough to relate this part of the sad story at any length. The terror of those dreadful days creeps over me again when I think of them. I mean to tell the truth without shrinking; but I may at least consult my own feelings by dwelling on certain particulars as briefly as I can.

I shall describe my conduct towards the two men who courted me, in the plainest terms, if I say that I distinguished neither of them. Innocently and stupidly I encouraged them both.

In books, women are generally represented as knowing their own minds in matters which relate to love and marriage. This is not my experience of myself. Day followed day; and, ridiculous as it may appear, I could not for the life of me decide which of my two admirers I liked best!

Captain Stanwick was, at first, the man of my choice. While he kept his temper under control, he charmed me. But when he let it escape him, he sometimes disappointed, sometimes irritated me. In that frame of mind I turned for relief to Lionel Varleigh, feeling that he was the more gentle and the more worthy man of the two, and honestly believing, at such times, that I preferred him to his rival. For the first few days after our visit to Herne Wood I had excellent opportunities of comparing them. They paid their visits to us together, and they divided their attentions carefully between me and my aunt. At the end of the week, however, they began to

present themselves separately. If I had possessed any experience of the natures of men, I might have known what this meant, and might have seen the future possibility of some more serious estrangement between the two friends, of which I might be the unfortunate cause. As it was, I never once troubled my head about what might be passing out of my presence. Whether they came together, or whether they came separately, their visits were always agreeable to me, and I thought of nothing and cared for nothing more.

But the time that was to enlighten me was not far off.

One day Captain Stanwick called much earlier than usual. My aunt had not yet returned from her morning walk. The Captain made some excuse for presenting himself under these circumstances which I have now forgotten. Without actually committing himself to a proposal of marriage, he spoke with such tender feeling, he managed his hold on my inexperience so delicately, that he entrapped me into saying some words, on my side, which I remembered with a certain dismay as soon as I was left alone again. In half an hour more Mr. Lionel Varleigh was announced as my next visitor. I at once noticed a certain disturbance in his look and manner which was quite new in my experience of him. I offered him a chair. To my surprise he declined to take it.

‘I must trust to your indulgence to permit me to put an embarrassing question to you,’ he began. ‘It rests with you, Miss Duval, to decide whether I shall remain here, or whether I shall relieve you of my presence by leaving the room.’

‘What can you possibly mean?’ I asked.

‘Is it your wish,’ he went on, ‘that I should pay you no more visits except in Captain Stanwick’s company, or by Captain Stanwick’s express permission?’

My astonishment deprived me for the moment of the power of answering him. ‘Do you really mean that Captain Stanwick has forbidden you to call on me?’ I asked as soon as I could speak.

‘I have exactly repeated what Captain Stanwick said to me half an hour since,’ Lionel Varleigh answered.

In my indignation at hearing this, I entirely forgot the rash words of encouragement which the Captain had entrapped me into speaking to him. When I think of it now, I am ashamed to record the language in which I resented this man’s presumptuous assertion of authority over me. Having committed one act of indiscretion already, my anxiety to assert my freedom of action hurried me into committing another. I bade Mr. Varleigh welcome whenever he chose to visit me, in terms which made his

face flush under the emotions of pleasure and surprise which I had aroused in him. My wounded vanity acknowledged no restraints. I signed to him to take a seat on the sofa at my side; I engaged to go to his lodgings the next day, with my aunt, and see the collection of curiosities which he had amassed in the course of his travels. I almost believe, if he had tried to kiss me, that I was angry enough with the Captain to have let him do it!

Remember what my life had been—remember how ignorantly I had passed the precious days of my youth, how insidiously a sudden accession of wealth had encouraged my folly and my pride—and try, like good Christians, to make some allowance for me!

My aunt came in from her walk before Mr Varleigh's visit had ended. She received him rather coldly, and he perceived it. After reminding me of our appointment for the next day, he took his leave.

'What appointment does Mr. Varleigh mean?' my aunt asked, as soon as we were alone. 'Is it wise, under the circumstances, to make appointments with Mr. Varleigh?' she said, when I had answered her question. I naturally inquired what she meant. My aunt replied, 'I have met Captain Stanwick while I was out walking. He has told me something which I am quite at a loss to understand. Is it possible, Bertha, that you have received a proposal of marriage from him favourably, without saying one word about your intentions to me?'

I instantly denied it. However rashly I might have spoken, I had certainly said nothing to justify Captain Stanwick in claiming me as his promised wife. In his mean fear of a fair rivalry with Mr. Varleigh, he had deliberately misinterpreted me. 'If I marry either of the two,' I said, 'it will be Mr. Varleigh!'

My aunt shook her head. 'These two gentlemen seem to be both in love with you, Bertha. It is a trying position for you between them, and I am afraid you have acted with some indiscretion. Captain Stanwick tells me that he and his friend have come to a separation already. I fear you are the cause of it. Mr. Varleigh has left the hotel at which he was staying with the Captain, in consequence of a disagreement between them this morning. You were not aware of that when you accepted his invitation. Shall I write an excuse for you? We must at least put off the visit, my dear, until you have set yourself right with Captain Stanwick.'

I began to feel a little alarmed, but I was too obstinate to yield without a struggle. 'Give me time to think over it,' I said. 'To write an excuse seems like acknowledging the Captain's authority. Let us wait till to-morrow morning.'

IV.

The morning brought with it another visit from Captain Stanwick. This time my aunt was present. He looked at her without speaking, and turned to me, with his fiery temper showing itself already in his eyes.

‘I have a word to say to you in private,’ he began.

‘I have no secrets from my aunt,’ I answered. ‘Whatever you have to say, Captain Stanwick, may be said here.’

He opened his lips to reply, and suddenly checked himself. He was controlling his anger by so violent an effort that it turned his ruddy face pale. For the moment he conquered his temper—he addressed himself to me with the outward appearance of respect at least.

‘Has that man Varleigh lied?’ he asked; ‘or have you given *him* hopes too—after what you said to me yesterday?’

‘I said nothing to you yesterday which gives you any right to put that question to me,’ I rejoined. ‘You have entirely misunderstood me if you think so.’

My aunt attempted to say a few temperate words, in the hope of soothing him. He waved his hand, refusing to listen to her, and advanced closer to me.

You have misunderstood me, he said, ‘if you think I am a man to be made a plaything of in the hands of a coquette!’

My aunt interposed once more, with a resolution which I had not expected from her.

‘Captain Stanwick,’ she said, ‘you are forgetting yourself.’

He paid no heed to her; he persisted in speaking to me. ‘It is my misfortune to love you,’ he burst out. ‘My whole heart is set on you. I mean to be your husband, and no other man living shall stand in my way. After what you said to me yesterday, I have a right to consider that you have favoured my addresses. This is not a mere flirtation. Don’t think it! I say it’s the passion of a life! Do you hear? It’s the passion of a man’s whole life! I am not to be trifled with. I have had a night of sleepless misery about you—I have suffered enough for you—and you’re not worth it. Don’t laugh! This is no laughing matter. Take care, Bertha! Take care!’

My aunt rose from her chair. She astonished me. On all ordinary occasions the most retiring, the most feminine of women, she now walked up to Captain Stanwick and looked him full in the face without flinching for an instant.

‘You appear to have forgotten that you are speaking in the

presence of two ladies,' she said. 'Alter your tone, sir, or I shall be obliged to take my niece out of the room.'

Half angry, half frightened, I tried to speak in my turn. My aunt signed to me to be silent. The Captain drew back a step as if he felt her reproof. But his eyes, still fixed on me, were as fiercely bright as ever. *There* the gentleman's superficial good-breeding failed to hide the natural man beneath.

'I will leave you in undisturbed possession of the room,' he said to my aunt with bitter politeness. 'Before I go, permit me to give your niece an opportunity of reconsidering her conduct before it is too late.' My aunt drew back, leaving him free to speak to me. After considering for a moment, he laid his hand firmly, but not roughly, on my arm. 'You have accepted Lionel Varleigh's invitation to visit him to-day,' he said, 'under pretence of seeing his curiosities. Think again before you decide on keeping that engagement. If you go to Varleigh to-morrow, you will repent it to the last day of your life.' Saying those words, in a tone which made me tremble in spite of myself, he walked to the door. As he laid his hand on the lock, he turned towards me for the last time. 'I forbid you to go to Varleigh's lodgings,' he said very distinctly and quietly. 'Understand what I tell you. I forbid it.'

With those words he left us.

My aunt sat down by me and took my hand kindly. 'There is only one thing to be done,' she said; 'we must return at once to Nettlegrove. If Captain Stanwick attempts to annoy you in your own house, we have neighbours who will protect us, and we have Mr. Loring, our Rector, to appeal to for advice. As for Mr. Varleigh, I will write our excuses myself before we go away.'

She put out her hand to ring the bell and order the carriage. I stopped her. My childish pride urged me to assert myself in some way, after the passive position that I had been forced to occupy during the interview with Captain Stanwick. 'No,' I said, 'it is not acting fairly towards Mr. Varleigh to break our engagement with him. Let us return to Nettlegrove by all means, but let us first call on Mr. Varleigh and take our leave. Are we to behave rudely to a gentleman who has always treated us with the utmost consideration, because Captain Stanwick has tried to frighten us by cowardly threats? The commonest feeling of self-respect forbids it.'

My aunt protested against this outbreak of folly with perfect temper and good sense. But my obstinacy (my firmness as I thought it!) was immovable. I left her to choose between going

with me to Mr. Varleigh or letting me go to him by myself. Finding it useless to resist, she decided, it is needless to say, on going with me.

We found Mr. Varleigh very courteous, but more than usually grave and quiet. Our visit only lasted for a few minutes; my aunt used the influence of her age and her position to shorten it. She mentioned family affairs as the motive which recalled us to Nettlegrove. I took it on myself to invite Mr. Varleigh to visit me at my own house. He bowed, and thanked me, without engaging himself to accept the invitation. When I offered him my hand at parting, he raised it to his lips, and kissed it with a fervour that agitated me. His eyes looked into mine with a sorrowful admiration, with a lingering regret, as if they were taking their leave of me for a long while. 'Don't forget me!' he whispered, as he stood at the door, while I followed my aunt out. 'Come to Nettlegrove,' I whispered back. His eyes dropped to the ground; he let me go without a word more.

This, I declare solemnly, was all that passed at our visit. By some unexpressed consent among us, no allusion whatever was made to Captain Stanwick; not even his name was mentioned. I never knew that the two men had met just before we called on Mr. Varleigh. Nothing was said which could suggest to me the slightest suspicion of any arrangement for another meeting later in the day. Beyond the vague threats which had escaped Captain Stanwick's lips—threats which I own I was rash enough to despise—I had no warning whatever of the dreadful events which happened at Maplesworth on the day after our return to Nettlegrove Hall.

I can only add that I am ready to submit to any questions that may be put to me. Pray don't think me a heartless woman. At that time I knew so little of the world—I was so ignorant of the false pretences under which men hide what is selfish and savage in their natures from the women whom it is their interest to deceive.

No. 2.—*Julius Bender, fencing-master, writes and says:—*

I am of German nationality; established in England as teacher of the use of the sword and the pistol since the beginning of the present year.

Finding business slack in London, it unfortunately occurred to me to try what I could do in the country. I had heard of Maplesworth as a place largely frequented by visitors on account

of the scenery, as well as by invalids in need of taking the waters, and I opened a gallery there at the beginning of the season of 1817, for fencing and pistol practice. About the visitors I had not been deceived; there were plenty of idle young gentlemen among them who might have been expected to patronise my establishment. They showed the most barbarous indifference to the noble art of attack and defence—came by twos and threes, looked at my gallery, and never returned. My small means began to fail me. After paying my expenses, I was really at my wits' end to find a few pounds to go on with, in the hope of better days.

One gentleman I remember, who came to see me, and who behaved most liberally. He described himself as an American, and said he had travelled a great deal. As my ill luck would have it, he stood in no need of my instructions. On the two or three occasions when he amused himself with my foils and my pistols, he proved to be one of the most expert swordsmen and one of the finest shots that I ever met with. It was not wonderful: he had by nature cool nerves and a quick eye; and he had been taught by the masters of the art in Vienna and Paris.

Early in July—the 9th or 10th of the month, I think—I was sitting alone in my gallery, looking ruefully enough at the last two sovereigns in my purse, when a gentleman was announced who wanted a lesson. ‘A *private* lesson,’ he said with emphasis, looking at the man who cleaned and took care of my weapons.

I sent the man out of the room. The stranger (an Englishman, and, as I fancied, judging by outward appearances, a military man as well) took from his pocket-book a fifty-pound bank-note, and held it up before me. ‘I am not a very practised swordsman,’ he said, ‘and I have no time to improve myself. Teach me a trick which will make me a match for a good fencer, and keep the secret, and there are fifty pounds for you.’

I hesitated. I did indeed hesitate, poor as I was. But this devil of a man held his bank-note before me whichever way I looked, and I had only two pounds left in the world!

‘Are you going to fight a duel?’ I asked.

‘That’s no business of yours,’ he answered.

I waited a little, with the infernal bank-note tempting me, and then tried him again.

‘If I teach you the trick,’ I said, ‘will you give me your word of honour that you will make no bad use of your lesson?’

‘Yes,’ he said impatiently enough.

I was not quite satisfied yet.

(‘Will you swear it?’ I asked,

‘Of course I will,’ he answered. ‘Take the money, and don’t keep me waiting any longer!’

I took the money, and I taught him the trick—and I regretted it almost as soon as it was done. Not that I knew, mind, of any serious consequences that followed; for I returned to London the next morning. My sentiments were those of a man of honour, who felt that he had degraded his art, and who could not be quite sure that he might not have armed the hand of an assassin as well. I have no more to say.

No. 3.—*Thomas Outwater, servant to Captain Stanwick, writes and says:—*

If I did not firmly believe my master to be out of his senses, no punishment that I could receive would prevail upon me to write of him what I am going to write now.

But I say he is mad, and therefore not accountable for what he has done—mad for love of a young woman. If I could have my way, I should like to twist her neck, though she is a lady, and a great heiress into the bargain. Before she came between them, my master and Mr. Varleigh were more like brothers than anything else. She set them at variance, and whether she meant to do it or not is all the same to me. I own I took a dislike to her when I first saw her. She was one of the light-haired, blue-eyed sort, with an innocent look and a snaky waist—a bad sort, all the world over, as I have found them.

I hear I am not expected to write the account of the disagreements between the two gentlemen, of which this lady was the cause. I am to state what I did in Maplesworth, and what I saw afterwards in Herne Wood. Poor as I am, I would give a five-pound note to anybody who could do it for me. Unfortunately, I must do it for myself.

On the 10th of July, in the evening, my master went, for the second time that day, to Mr. Varleigh’s lodgings.

I am certain of the date, because it was the day of publication of the town newspaper, and there was a law report in it which set everybody talking. There had been a duel with pistols, a day or two before, between a resident in the town and a visitor, on account of some dispute at cards. Nothing very serious came of the meeting. One of the men only was hurt, and the wound proved to be of no great importance. The awkward part of the matter was that the constables appeared on the ground before the wounded man had been removed. He and his two seconds were caught, and the prisoners were committed for trial. Duelling (the magistrates

said) was an inhuman and unchristian practice, and they were determined to put the law in force and stop it. This sentence made a great stir in the town, and fixed the date, as I have just said, in my mind.

Having been accidentally within hearing of some of the disputes concerning Miss Duval between my master and Mr. Varleigh, I had my misgivings about the Captain's second visit to the friend with whom he had quarrelled already. A gentleman called on him, soon after he had gone out, on important business. This gave me an excuse for following him to Mr. Varleigh's rooms with the visitor's card, and I took the opportunity.

I heard them at high words on my way upstairs, and waited a little on the landing. The Captain was in one of his furious rages; Mr. Varleigh was firm and cool as usual. After listening for a minute or so, I heard enough (in my opinion) to justify me in entering the room. I caught my master in the act of lifting his cane—threatening to strike Mr. Varleigh. He instantly dropped his hand, and turned on me in a fury at my intrusion. Taking no notice of his fury, I gave him his friend's card, and went out. A talk followed in voices too low for me to hear outside the room, and then the Captain approached the door. I got out of his way, feeling very uneasy about what was to come next. I could not presume to question Mr. Varleigh. The only thing I could think of was to tell the young lady's aunt what I had seen and heard, and to plead with Miss Duval herself to make peace between them. When I inquired for the ladies at their lodgings, I was told that they had left Maplesworth.

I saw no more of the Captain that night.

The next morning he seemed to be quite himself again. He said to me, 'Thomas, I am going sketching in Herne Wood. Take the paint-box and the rest of it, and put this into the carriage.'

He handed me a packet as thick as my arm, and about three feet long, done up in many folds of canvas. I made bold to ask what it was. He answered that it was an artist's sketching umbrella, packed for travelling.

In an hour's time the carriage stopped on the road below Herne Wood. My master said he would carry his sketching things himself, and I was to wait with the carriage. In giving him the so-called umbrella, I took the occasion of his eye being off me for the moment to pass my hand over it carefully; and I felt, through the canvas, the hilt of a sword. As an old soldier, I could not be mistaken—the hilt of a sword.

What I thought, on making this discovery, does not much

matter. What I did was to watch the Captain into the wood, and then to follow him.

I tracked him along the path to where there was a clearing in the midst of the trees. There he stopped, and I got behind a tree. He undid the canvas, and produced *two* swords concealed in the packet. If I had felt any doubt before, I was certain of what was coming now. A duel without seconds or witnesses, by way of keeping the town magistrates in the dark—a duel between my master and Mr. Varleigh! As his name came into my mind the man himself appeared, making his way into the clearing from the other side of the wood.

What could I do to stop it? No human creature was in sight. The nearest village was a mile away, reckoning from the farther side of the wood. The coachman was a stupid old man, quite useless in a difficulty, even if I had had time enough to go back to the road and summon him to help me. While I was thinking about it, the Captain and Mr. Varleigh had stripped to their shirts and trousers. When they crossed their swords, I could stand it no longer—I burst in on them. ‘For God Almighty’s sake, gentlemen,’ I cried out, ‘don’t fight without seconds!’ My master turned on me, like the madman he was, and threatened me with the point of his sword. Mr. Varleigh pulled me back out of harm’s way. ‘Don’t be afraid,’ he whispered, as he led me back to the verge of the clearing; ‘I have chosen the sword instead of the pistol expressly to spare his life.’

Those noble words (spoken by as brave and true a man as ever breathed) quieted me. I knew Mr. Varleigh had earned the repute of being one of the finest swordsmen in Europe.

The duel began. I was placed behind my master, and was consequently opposite to his antagonist. The Captain stood on his defence, waiting for the other to attack. Mr. Varleigh made a pass. I was opposite the point of his sword; I saw it touch the Captain’s left shoulder. In the same instant of time my master struck up his opponent’s sword with his own weapon, seized Mr. Varleigh’s right wrist in his left hand, and passed his sword clean through Mr. Varleigh’s breast. He fell, the victim of a murderous trick—fell without a word or a cry.

The Captain turned slowly, and faced me with his bloody sword in his hand. I can’t tell you how he looked; I can only say that the sight of him turned me faint with terror. I have been through the Peninsular War; I was at Waterloo—I am no coward. But I tell you the cold sweat poured down my face like water. I should have dropped if I had not held by the branch of a tree.

My master waited until I had in a measure recovered myself. 'Feel if his heart beats,' he said, pointing to the man on the ground.

I obeyed. He was dead—the heart was still; the beat of the pulse was gone. I said, 'You have killed him!'

The Captain made no answer. He packed up the two swords again in the canvas, and put them under his arm. Then he told me to follow him with the sketching materials. I drew back from him without speaking; there was a horrid hollow sound in his voice that I did not like. 'Do as I tell you,' he said: 'you have yourself to thank for it if I refuse to lose sight of you now.' I managed to answer that he might trust me to say nothing. He refused to trust me; he put out his hand to take hold of me. I could not stand that. 'I'll go with you,' I said; 'don't touch me!' We reached the carriage and returned to Maplesworth. The same day we took the express train to London.

In London I contrived to give the Captain the slip. By the first train the next morning I was back at Maplesworth, eager to hear what had happened, and if the body had been found. Not a word of news reached me; nothing seemed to be known of the duel in Herne Wood.

I went to the wood—on foot, fearing that I might be traced if I hired a carriage. The country round was as solitary as usual. Not a creature was near when I entered the wood; not a creature was near when I looked into the clearing.

There was nothing on the ground. The body was gone.

No. 4.—*The Reverend Alfred Loring, Rector of Nettlegrove, writes and says:—*

I.

Early in the month of October, 1817, I was informed that Miss Bertha Duval had called at my house, and wished to see me in private.

I had first been presented to Miss Duval on her arrival, with her aunt, to take possession of her property at Nettlegrove Hall. My opportunities of improving my acquaintance with her had not been so numerous as I could have desired, and I sincerely regretted it. She had produced a very favourable impression on me. Singularly inexperienced and impulsive—with an odd mixture of shyness and vivacity in her manner, and subject now and then to outbursts of vanity and petulance which she was divertingly incapable of concealing—I could detect, nevertheless, under the surface the signs which told of a true and generous nature, of a simple and

pure heart. Her personal appearance, I should add, was greatly in her favour. There was something in it so peculiar, and at the same time so fascinating, that I am conscious it may have prejudiced me in her favour. For fear of this acknowledgment being misunderstood, I think it right to add that I am old enough to be her grandfather, and that I am also a married man.

I told the servant to show Miss Duval into my study.

The moment she entered the room, her appearance alarmed me: she looked literally panic-stricken. I offered to send for my wife; she refused the proposal. I entreated her to take time at least to compose herself. It was not in her impulsive nature to do this. She said, 'Give me your hand to encourage me, and let me speak while I can.' I gave her my hand, poor soul. I said, 'Speak to me, my dear, as if I were your father.'

So far as I could understand the incoherent statement which she addressed to me, she had been the object of admiration (while visiting Maplesworth) to two gentlemen, who both desired to marry her. Hesitating between them, and perfectly inexperienced in such matters, she had been the unfortunate cause of enmity between the rivals, and had returned to Nettlegrove, at her aunt's suggestion, as the best means of extricating herself from a very embarrassing position. The removal failing to alleviate her distressing recollections of what had happened, she and her aunt had tried a further change by making a tour of two months on the Continent. She had returned in a more quiet frame of mind. To her great surprise, she had heard nothing of either of her two suitors, from the day when she left Maplesworth to the day when she presented herself at my rectory.

Early that morning she was walking, after breakfast, in the park at Nettlegrove when she heard footsteps behind her. She turned, and found herself face to face with one of her suitors at Maplesworth. I am informed that there is no necessity now for my suppressing the name. The gentleman was Captain Stanwick.

He was so fearfully changed for the worse that she hardly knew him again. After his first glance at her, he held his hand over his bloodshot eyes as if the sunlight hurt them. The words in which he addressed her increased her terror. Without a word to prepare her for the disclosure, he confessed that he had killed Mr. Varleigh in a duel. His remorse (he told her) had unsettled his reason: only a few days had passed since he had been released from confinement in an asylum. 'You are the cause of it,' he said wildly. 'It is for love of you. I have but one hope left to live for, my hope in you. If you cast me off, my mind is made

up—I will give my life for the life that I have taken ; I will die by my own hand. Look at me, and you will see that I am in earnest. My future as a living man depends on your decision. Think of it to-day, and meet me here to-morrow. Not at this time ; the horrid daylight feels like fire in my eyes, and goes like fire to my brain. Wait till sunset—you will find me here.'

He left her as suddenly as he had appeared. When she had sufficiently recovered herself to be able to think, she decided on saying nothing of what had happened to her aunt. She took her way to the rectory, to seek my advice.

It is needless to encumber my narrative by any statement of the questions which I felt it my duty to put to her under these circumstances.

My inquiries informed me that Captain Stanwick had, in the first instance, produced a favourable impression on her. The less showy qualities of Mr. Varleigh had afterwards grown on her liking ; aided greatly by the repelling effect on her mind of the Captain's violent language and conduct when he had reason to suspect that his rival was being preferred to him. When she knew the horrible news of Mr. Varleigh's death, she 'knew her own heart' (to repeat her exact words to me) by the shock that she felt. Towards Captain Stanwick the only feeling of which she was now conscious was, naturally, a feeling of the strongest aversion.

My own course in this difficult and painful matter appeared to me to be clear.

'It is your duty as a Christian to see this miserable man again,' I said. 'And it is my duty, as your friend and pastor, to sustain you under the trial. I will go with you to-morrow to the place of meeting.'

II.

The next evening we found Captain Stanwick waiting for us in the park.

He drew back on seeing me. I explained to him, temperately and firmly, what my position was. With sullen looks he resigned himself to endure my presence. By degrees I won his confidence. My first impression of him remains unshaken—the man's reason was unsettled. I suspected that the assertion of his release was a falsehood, and that he had really escaped from the asylum. It was impossible to lure him into telling me where the place was. He was too cunning to do this—too cunning to say anything about his relations, when I tried to turn the talk that way next. On the other hand, he spoke with a revolting readiness of the crime that he had committed, and of his settled resolution to destroy himself if Miss

Duval refused to be his wife. 'I have nothing else to live for; I am alone in the world,' he said. 'Even my servant has deserted me. He knows how I killed Lionel Varleigh.' He paused, and spoke his next words in a whisper to me. 'I killed him by a trick—he was the best swordsman of the two.'

This confession was so horrible that I shrank from believing it to be inspired by anything more serious than an insane delusion. On pressing my inquiries, I found that the same idea must have occurred to the poor wretch's relations, and to the doctors who signed the certificates for placing him under medical care. This conclusion (as I afterwards heard) was greatly strengthened by the fact that Mr. Varleigh's body had not been found on the reported scene of the duel. As to the servant, he had deserted his master in London, and had never reappeared. So far as my poor judgment went, the question before me was not of delivering a self-accused murderer to justice (with no corpse to testify against him), but of restoring an insane man to the care of the persons who had been appointed to restrain him.

I tried to test the strength of his delusion in an interval when he was not urging his shocking entreaties on Miss Duval.

'How do you know that you killed Mr. Varleigh?' I said.

He looked at me with a wild terror in his eyes. Suddenly he lifted his right hand, and shook it in the air, with a moaning cry, which was unmistakably a cry of pain. 'Should I see his ghost,' he asked, 'if I had not killed him? I know it, by the pain that wrings me in the hand that stabbed him. Always in my right hand! always the same pain at the moment when I see him!' He stopped, and ground his teeth in the agony and reality of his delusion. 'Look!' he cried. 'Look between the two trees behind you. There he is—with his dark hair and his shaven face, and his steady look! There he is, standing before me as he stood in the wood, with his eyes on my eyes, and his sword feeling mine!' He turned to Miss Duval. 'Do *you* see him too?' he asked eagerly. 'Tell me the truth. My whole life depends on your telling me the truth.'

She controlled herself with a wonderful courage. 'I don't see him,' she answered.

He took out his handkerchief, and passed it over his face with a gasp of relief. 'There is my last chance!' he said. 'If she will be true to me—if she will be always near me, morning, noon, and night, I shall be released from the sight of him. See! he is fading away already. Gone!' he cried, with a scream of exultation. He fell on his knees, and looked at Miss Duval like a savage adoring his idol. 'Will you cast me off now?' he asked

humbly. 'Lionel was fond of you in his lifetime. His spirit is a merciful spirit. He shrinks from frightening you; he has left me for your sake; he will release me for your sake. Pity me, take me to live with you—and I shall never see him again!'

It was dreadful to hear him. I saw that the poor girl could endure no more. 'Leave us,' I whispered to her; 'I will join you at the house.'

He heard me, and instantly placed himself between us. 'Let her promise, or she shan't go.'

She felt, as I felt, the imperative necessity of saying anything that might soothe him. At a sign from me she gave him her promise to return.

He was satisfied—he insisted on kissing her hand, and then he let her go. I had by this time succeeded in inducing him to trust me. He proposed, of his own accord, that I should accompany him to the inn in the village at which he had been staying. The landlord (naturally enough distrusting his wretched guest) had warned him that morning to find some other place of shelter. I engaged to use my influence with the man to make him change his purpose, and I succeeded in effecting the necessary arrangements for having the poor wretch properly looked after. On my return to my own house, I wrote to a brother magistrate living near me, and to the superintendent of our county asylum, requesting them to consult with me on the best means of lawfully restraining Captain Stanwick until we could communicate with his relations. Could I have done more than this? The event of the next morning answered that question—answered it at once and for ever.

III.

Presenting myself at Nettlegrove Hall towards sunset, to take charge of Miss Duval, I was met by an obstacle in the shape of a protest from her aunt.

This good lady had been informed of the appearance of Captain Stanwick in the park, and she strongly disapproved of encouraging any further communication with him on the part of her niece. She also considered that I had failed in my duty in still leaving the Captain at liberty. I told her that I was only waiting to act on the advice of competent persons, who would arrive the next day to consult with me; and I did my best to persuade her of the wisdom of the course that I had taken in the mean time. Miss Duval, on her side, was resolved to be true to the promise that she had given. Between us, we induced her aunt to give way on certain terms.

'I know the part of the park in which the meeting is to take place,' the old lady said; 'it is my niece's favourite walk. If she is not brought back to me in half an hour's time, I shall send the men-servants to protect her.'

The twilight was falling when we reached the appointed place. We found Captain Stanwick angry and suspicious; it was not easy to pacify him on the subject of our delay. His insanity seemed to me to be now more marked than ever. He had seen, or dreamed of seeing, the ghost during the past night. For the first time (he said) the apparition of the dead man had spoken to him. In solemn words it had condemned him to expiate his crime by giving his life for the life that he had taken. It had warned him not to trust to his marriage with Bertha Duval: 'She shall share your punishment if she shares your life. And you shall know it by this sign—*She shall see me as you see me.*'

I tried to compose him. He shook his head in immovable despair. 'No,' he answered; 'if she sees him when I see him, there ends the one hope of release that holds me to life. It will be good-bye between us, and good-bye for ever!'

We had walked on, while we were speaking, to a part of the park through which there flowed a rivulet of clear water. On the farther bank the open ground led down into a wooded valley. On our side of the stream rose a thick plantation of fir-trees, intersected by a winding path. Captain Stanwick stopped as we reached the place. His eyes rested in the darkening twilight on the narrow space pierced by the path among the trees. On a sudden he lifted his right hand, with the same cry of pain which we had heard before; with his left hand he took Miss Duval by the arm. 'There!' he said. 'Look where I look! Do you see him there?'

As the words passed his lips, a dimly-visible figure appeared, advancing towards us along the path.

Was it the figure of a living man? or was it the creation of my own excited fancy? Before I could ask myself the question, the man advanced a step nearer to us. A last gleam of the dying light fell on his face through an opening in the trees. At the same instant Miss Duval started back from Captain Stanwick with a scream of terror. She would have fallen if I had not been near enough to support her. The Captain was instantly at her side again. 'Speak!' he cried. 'Do you see it too?'

She was just able to say 'Yes,' before she fainted in my arms.

He stooped over her, and touched her cold cheek with his

lips. 'Good-bye!' he said, in tones suddenly and strangely changed to the most exquisite tenderness. 'Good-bye, for ever!'

He leapt the rivulet; he crossed the open ground; he was lost to sight in the valley beyond.

As he disappeared, the visionary man among the fir-trees advanced; passed in silence; crossed the rivulet at a bound; and vanished as the figure of the Captain had vanished before him.

I was left alone with the swooning woman. Not a sound, far or near, broke the stillness of the coming night.

No. 5.—*Mr. Frederic Darnel, member of the College of Surgeons, writes and says:—*

In the intervals of my professional duties I am accustomed to occupy myself in studying Botany, assisted by a friend and neighbour, whose tastes in this respect resemble my own. When I can spare an hour or two from my patients, we go out together searching for specimens. Our favourite place is Herne Wood. It is rich in material for the botanist, and it is only a mile distant from the village in which I live.

Early in July, my friend and I made a discovery in the wood of a very alarming and unexpected kind. We found a man in the clearing, prostrated by a dangerous wound, and to all appearance dead.

We carried him to the gamekeeper's cottage, on the outskirts of the wood, and on the side of it nearest to our village. He and his boy were out, but the light cart in which he makes his rounds, in the remoter part of his master's property, was in the outhouse. While my friend was putting the horse to, I examined the stranger's wound. It had been quite recently inflicted, and I doubted whether it had (as yet, at any rate) really killed him. I did what I could with the linen and cold water which the gamekeeper's wife offered to me, and then my friend and I removed him carefully to my house in the cart.

I applied the necessary restoratives, and I had the pleasure of satisfying myself that the vital powers had revived. He was perfectly unconscious, of course, but the action of the heart became distinctly perceptible, and I had hopes.

In a few days more I felt fairly sure of him. Then the usual fever set in. I was obliged, in justice to his friends, to search his clothes in presence of a witness. We found his handkerchief, his purse, and his cigar-case, and nothing more. No letters or visiting cards; nothing marked on his clothes but initials. There

was no help for it but to wait to identify him until he could speak.

When that time came, he acknowledged to me that he had divested himself purposely of any clue to his identity, in the fear (if some mischance happened to him) of the news of it reaching his father and mother abruptly by means of the newspapers. He had sent a letter to his bankers in London, to be forwarded to his parents, if the bankers neither saw him nor heard from him in a month's time. His first act was to withdraw this letter. The other particulars which he communicated to me are, I am told, already known. I need only add that I willingly kept his secret, simply speaking of him in the neighbourhood as a traveller from foreign parts who had met with an accident.

His convalescence was a long one. It was the beginning of October before he was completely restored to health. When he left us he went to London. He behaved most liberally to me; and we parted with sincere good wishes on either side.

No. 6.—*Mr. Lionel Varleigh, of Boston, U.S.A., writes and says:—*

My first proceeding, on my recovery, was to go to the relations of Captain Stanwick in London, for the purpose of making inquiries about him.

I do not wish to justify myself at the expense of that miserable man. It is true that I loved Miss Duval too dearly to yield her to any rival except at her own wish. It is also true that Captain Stanwick more than once insulted me, and that I endured it. He had suffered from sunstroke in India, and in his angry moments he was hardly a responsible being. It was only when he threatened me with personal chastisement that my patience gave way. We met sword in hand. In my mind was the resolution to spare his life. In his mind was the resolution to kill me. I have forgiven him. I will say no more.

His relations informed me of the symptoms of insane delusion which he had shown after the duel; of his escape from the asylum in which he had been confined; and of the failure to find him again.

The moment I heard this news the dread crossed my mind that Stanwick had found his way to Miss Duval. In an hour more I was travelling to Nettlegrave Hall.

I arrived late in the evening, and found Miss Duval's aunt in great alarm about the young lady's safety. Bertha was at that very moment speaking to Stanwick in the park, with only an old

man (the Rector) to protect her. I volunteered to go at once, and assist in taking care of her. A servant accompanied me to show me the place of meeting. We heard voices indistinctly, but saw no one. The servant pointed to a path through the fir-trees. I went on quickly by myself, leaving the man within call. In a few minutes I came upon them suddenly, at a little distance from me, on the bank of a stream.

The fear of seriously alarming Miss Duval, if I showed myself too suddenly, deprived me for a moment of my presence of mind. I stopped to consider what it might be best to do. I was not so completely protected from discovery by the trees as I had supposed. She had seen me; I heard her cry of alarm. The instant afterwards I saw Stanwick leap over the rivulet and take to flight. That action roused me. Without stopping for a word of explanation, I pursued him.

Unhappily, I missed my footing in the obscure light, and fell on the open ground beyond the stream. When I had gained my feet once more, Stanwick had disappeared among the trees which marked the boundary of the park beyond me. I could see nothing of him, and I could hear nothing of him, when I came out on the high road. There I met with a labouring man who showed me the way to the village.

From the inn I sent a letter to Miss Duval's aunt, explaining what had happened, and asking leave to call at the Hall on the next day.

Early in the morning the Rector came to me at the inn. He brought sad news. Miss Duval was suffering from a nervous attack, and my visit to the Hall must be deferred. Speaking next of the missing man, I heard all that Mr. Loring could tell me. My intimate knowledge of Stanwick enabled me to draw my own conclusion from the facts. The thought instantly crossed my mind that the poor wretch might have committed his expiatory suicide at the very spot on which he had attempted to kill me. Leaving the rector to institute the necessary inquiries, I took the train to Maplesworth on my way to Herne Wood.

Advancing from the high road to the wood, I saw two persons at a little distance from me—a man in the dress of a gamekeeper and a lad. I was too much agitated to take any special notice of them; I hurried along the path which led to the clearing. My presentiment had not misled me. There he lay, dead on the scene of the duel, with a blood-stained razor by his side! I fell on my knees by the corpse; I took his cold hand in mine; and I thanked God that I had forgiven him in the first days of my recovery.

I was still kneeling, when I felt myself seized from behind. I struggled to my feet, and confronted the gamekeeper. He had noticed my hurry in entering the wood ; his suspicions had been aroused, and he and the lad had followed me. There was blood on my clothes, there was horror in my face. Appearances were plainly against me ; I had no choice but to accompany the gamekeeper to the nearest magistrate.

My instructions to my solicitors forbade them to vindicate my innocence by taking any technical legal objections to the action of the magistrate or of the coroner. I insisted on my witnesses being allowed to write, in their own way, what they could truly declare on my behalf, and on the defence being founded upon the materials thus obtained. In the mean while I was detained in custody, as a matter of course.

With this event the tragedy of the duel reached its culminating point. I was accused of murdering the man who with his own guilty hand had attempted to take my life !

BERTHA'S POSTSCRIPT.

I write these lines after an interval of six months. I am going to do a bold thing—I am going to suppress the narrative of the defence, and advance at once to the results.

First result :—I am Mrs. Lionel Varleigh.

Second result :—I am as happy as the day is long.

Third result :—I am going to America with my husband, to make his father and mother as happy as I am.

If you want to know any more, you must be so good as to wait for my return to England ; or you can apply in the interval, if you prefer it, to my aunt, at Nettlegrove Hall.

The Parisian Salons of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

BY H. BARTON BAKER.

THE extraordinary influence of the Parisian salons upon the intellectual, moral, religious, and political life of France is a phenomenon peculiar to the history of that country. It has no parallel in that of our own or any other continental nation. In regard to England, a free press and parliamentary institutions, which afford so far more extensive a field to intellectual activity than any mere coterie, however lofty might be its aims or however great its members, may partially explain this divergence; but the primary cause must be sought in the idiosyncrasy of the French people, which ever tends to cliques and coteries, and is before all things sociable. Every great movement, artistic, literary, and social, of the last century emanated from the numerous and brilliant salons of Paris. Thence issued the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert, the satires of Voltaire, the '*De l'Esprit*' of Helvetius, the '*Système de la Nature*' of Holbach, and all that flood of atheistical and subversive literature which deluged France and Europe with infidelity and culminated in the great Revolution.

French society may be said to have been born in the salon. Yet the salon was not a French creation; that honour belongs to an Italian lady—Catherine, Marquise de Rambouillet—who, being brought to France by her husband, found the manners of the court of Henri le Grand so coarse to her refined Roman taste that she resolved to create a circle of her own, to which only those distinguished for refinement of manners and intellectual proclivities should be admitted. It was just at this period that France, having recovered from the devastating wars of the League, and now enjoying a hitherto unknown prosperity, thanks to the wise government of the king and his minister Sully, began to awaken to intellectual life; consequently the Marquise found numbers eager and willing to enter into her project.

The Parisians of those days were as rude and coarse in all matters of taste as were their neighbours, the English and Germans; their furniture was clumsy, their decorations were heavy, and the prevailing colours were red and tan. Imagine, then, the

contrast presented by apartments hung with delicate blue velvet trimmed with gold, adorned with beautiful paintings by the great Italian masters, a thousand elegancies and a profusion of flowers, that made of the apartments a brilliant garden. In the course of time the Marquise's assemblies became the supreme tribunal of taste and authority in all matters relating to language and literature. Here every poet of renown read his verses, every dramatist his plays, and received judgment, before giving them to the vulgar world. Here the French language was fixed, and every word put upon its trial, to be banished for ever as vulgar or adjudged fit for polite lips. Here was suggested to Richelieu the idea which afterwards took the practical form of the Académie Française. Here were developed those polished and elegant manners which until the Revolution rendered the French noble the gentleman *par excellence* of Europe, and the French language the most correct, piquant, and perfect medium of conversation of all modern tongues. Here modern society was created; and it was here that woman first began to exercise a marked influence upon the national life, which, while it softened and refined the manners, proved so disastrous to France in the persons of the Maintenons and Du Barrys. Here, also, arose that school of exaggerated gallantry and sentiment which afforded Molière and his contemporaries such splendid subjects for satire. Yet the '*Précieuses Ridicules*,' although born of this coterie, can scarcely be said to have been of it, as I shall presently endeavour to show. Under the Marquise, and her yet more celebrated daughter Julie, the Hôtel de Rambouillet rose to its highest fame about 1630, and kept its position until the troubles of the Fronde rebellion closed it in 1645.

During all these years it cannot be supposed but that imitations of these assemblies had sprung up. Marion de Lorme and Ninon de Lenclos, the Laïs and Aspasia of the period, opened their houses to all that was witty, gay, and licentious. Then there were the coterie of the female Frondeurs—the brilliant Madame de Chevreuse, the beautiful Madame de Longueville. Nor must we forget the poet Scarron, over whose gatherings the future Madame de Maintenon presided. But the true successor of Catherine de Rambouillet was Madame de Scudéry, the once famous novelist, the author of '*Le Grand Cyrus*,' '*Clélie*,' '*Ibrahim*,' romances in ten volumes! It was in her salons that Molière found his '*Précieuses Ridicules*,' and his '*Femmes Savantes*.' Here love and gallantry were reduced to a code of rules, any infringement of which was punished by expulsion from the society. According to the '*Précieuses*,' love was the ruling passion of the world, of which

woman was the absolute sovereign and man her subject and slave, whose duty it was to devote his whole life to her lightest wishes, and consider himself more than rewarded for every sacrifice if the lady deigned to cast a smile upon him. His love was supposed to be purely platonic, and to desire nothing beyond the society of the beloved, while its chief delight was to consist in an interchange of sentiments and in mutually analysing the subtlest traits of each other's passion. Marriage was regarded with great disgust; the lover had to pass through a long probation before he dared confess his *tendresse*, and it was only after years of devotion that he was permitted to kiss his lady's hand. The 'Précieuses' frequently received society in bed, retiring thither for that purpose; the visitors ranged themselves within the alcove in which the bedstead stood, and so conversed.¹ Her lover—for every 'Précieuse,' whether married or single, had a gallant—from being so received, came to be called an *alcôviste*. Here were held long discussions upon *l'amour d'esprit* and *l'amour de corps*. All students of Molière know how felicitously the great comedian has ridiculed these absurdities.

During the brilliant reign of Louis XIV. the salon declined; the king held the 'Précieuses' in great horror, and was never reconciled even to Madame de Sévigné, because she had been of that society. The memory of the Fronde rendered him equally inimical to all private assemblies; French society was no longer divided into separate coteries; the court was all, embraced all, and all who would not incur the kingly anger must find their delights within its precincts alone. Neither do we find any revival of the salon during those dark and terrible years of defeat and priestcraft which closed that long reign. Society seemed to have sunk into a heavy drowse, to be crushed beneath a leaden weight. The Duchesse du Maine at Sceaux alone kept alive some of the traditions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, wedded, however, with memories of the earlier days of Versailles. There were divertissements and mythological fêtes, faint reflections of those which the lover of La Vallière gave for her entertainment;

¹ For a lady to receive company in bed was a custom not confined to France. Lady Wortley Montague somewhere relates a similar fashion, although the occasion was a very different one, being that of a widow receiving the condolences of her friends. The persons whom the anecdote concerns were her father and her mother-in-law.

'When the funeral was over, the widow had to see company and receive in person the condolences of every lady on her visiting list. The apartments and staircases were all hung with black; while the duchess, closely veiled with crape, sat upright in her state bed under a high black canopy; and at the foot of the bed, ranged like a row of mutes, stood the grandchildren of the deceased. Profound silence reigned; the room was lighted by only a single wax taper, and the visitors, all in mourning, approached the bed on tip-toe.'

during the summer months no one was permitted to retire to rest until sunrise; all night long the company wandered among the trees of the park and along the margin of the lake, talking love and poetry, and discussing knotty points of gallantry, much as their grandfathers and grandmothers had done half a century before.

With the death of the old king and the accession of the Regent Orleans, there came a vast change over French society. The profligacy which had been for years skulking beneath the priest's cloak now stood forth in the broad light of day, no longer avoiding notice, but courting every eye and glorying in its infamy. Not the vilest days of Imperial or Papal Rome could surpass the infamies of the Regent's salons and of his *petits soupers*. Here were foreshadowed the liberty, equality, and fraternity of a succeeding generation; here mingled nobles, poets, philosophers, abbés, courtesans, and court ladies in bacchanalian orgies and celebrations of the Mysteries of Aphrodite. Splendid apartments, furnished with the most costly voluptuousness; viands which might have tempted Apicius or Lucullus; coarse bons mots, sallies of licentious wit, mockery at religion and morality, each *roué* striving to outdo the other; then a sudden influx of masques from the ball of the Opera, which was next door to the Palais Royal, and in swarm grisettes, danseuses, nobles, ladies attired as nuns, fairies, bayadères; noble lords as Chinamen, monks, and devils; now the revelry waxes riotous; the danseuses and grisettes fall upon the choice comestibles and the iced champagne (first introduced by the Regent's *chef de cuisine* at these orgies). The jests grow coarser and more sacrilegious, the laughter more boisterous; there is a babel of tongues, of oaths, and bacchanalian songs, unbridled licence of every kind, until intoxication lapses into stupefaction and swinish sleep. The Regent's daughter, the Duchesse du Berri, was frequently one of these bacchantes.

Such Agapemones as these, however, can be scarcely included among the salons; there were others more decorous, at least in outward seeming; but it was not until Louis XV. began to reign that the glories of the Hôtel de Rambouillet were revived, and the salon became a power such as neither Catherine nor Julie Montausier ever dreamed of. They attempted to dictate only in art, literature, and gallantry, but their successors undertook the dictation of all human affairs, temporal and spiritual, and discussed with equal freedom, and decided with equal certitude, the form of a sonnet, the best possible form of government, and every problem, religious and metaphysical, that has puzzled the world since the days of the seven sages. Some of these assemblies were of the

lightest and gayest, in which no more abstruse discussion than the fashion of a peruke or a shoe-buckle, and no graver conversation than the last new scandal, were permitted; in others, a laugh was never heard, a smile seldom seen, and all the talk was of *l'esprit*.

Let me endeavour to picture, however faintly, a few of the forms of this extinct society, so incongruous and contradictory in its elements. *La noblesse* must by courtesy come first, and to render the presentment complete we must attend it at its toilette, the most important operation of its life, ere we enter the reception rooms. The fine gentleman, having awoke about noon and partaken of chocolate, rose, and placed himself under the hands of half a dozen valets. One curled his peruke; a second handed him his silk stockings and red-heeled shoes; a third his gold-embroidered coat and vest, which have been known to cost as much as 25,000 livres; a fourth his gold-hilted rapier; a fifth his perfumed ruffles and handkerchief. Thus attired, Monsieur le Marquis was ready for the exertions of the day. About the same hour Madame la Marquise, or Mademoiselle the Marquise's daughter, would be similarly engaged. She also rose at noon, with a head too often aching from last night's excesses, to perform her toilette in a boudoir hung with rose-coloured silk, and attended by one or two favoured gallants. Her *femmes de chambre* are yet more numerous than the Marquis's valets: one dresses and powders her hair, and arranges it in one of the many curious forms then in vogue; another clasps her white neck and arms with pearls and jewels; a third fastens the diamond buckles of her dainty shoes; a fourth arranges her wide-spreading hoop; a fifth the fall of her sac or panier; a sixth holds her patch-box, most important of all the adjuncts of a lady's toilette, and one as indispensable to her as a powder-box and puff are to a young lady of the present day. She never moves without it, as patches drop sometimes in the hot rooms, and it is necessary to replace them. They are cut in all kinds of forms—stars, comets, crescents, moons, even coaches and four—anything that caprice can imagine. They have a language of their own, too, which is fully understood by the adepts, and each has a name according to its position. When placed in the corner of the eye, it is *la passionnée*; in the middle of the cheek, *la galante*; upon the nose, *l'effrontée*; near the lips, *la coquette*; upon a pimple, *la recéleuse*, &c. At the feet of Madame, while she dresses, lie little black boys holding her fan and heightening by contrast the brilliant whiteness of her skin. The toilette completed, she goes to visit her friends, or descends to her own salon to receive her visitors: a splendid apartment, carpeted with the finest productions of Turkish and Persian looms, hung with flowing gold-embroidered

silk, adorned with Venetian mirrors and crystal lustres. There are satin couches, gilded chairs, candelabra, clocks, baskets of flowers formed of gold, ivory, and ebony; Chinese knickknacks and monsters; porcelain so exquisitely frail that a breath of wind might shiver it. On grand reception days the varied costumes of the guests add a new splendour to the picture; officers of the musketeers in black and silver; chevaliers of the light horse in pale blue and gold; the Swiss in scarlet, the Abbés in black, and *la noblesse* in every combination of colour that fashion can suggest. The conversation is as malicious and frivolous as it is gay and piquant; everyone speaks in epigrams, everyone has a ridiculous *historiette* to tell, or an amusing scandal to relate about a dear friend; there is a jargon only understood by the initiated, much like our own fashionable slang; but there is not that tone, that perfect politeness, which we associate with our ideas of the *ancien régime*; the sallies are often rude enough, even in the presence of those against whom they are directed; the anecdotes and expressions are not always very refined or even decent, and a bon mot is never suffered to lose its point from any considerations of modesty. All talk together, and those who have the best lungs have the best chance of being heard. No one cares to listen; even the king himself, when present at such assemblies, is little more respected than others, and His Majesty is sometimes cut short in the middle of a speech, or finds it impossible for his powers of voice to contend against some sonorous speaker in his immediate vicinity. Leaving the talkers, we pass on to some quieter group seated round the card-tables. Watch with what eagerness Madame la Marquise plays; she has been losing heavily, staking not only her wealth but her honour. How pale and haggard she looks, and what a smile of complacent triumph is on the face of the chevalier her opponent. Monsieur l'Abbé, in his cassock and band, exchanges a shrug with the painted incarnation of wicked old age and avarice with whom he is playing; but she has seen so much of this sort of thing in her day, and everything save gold has long since ceased to interest her. Hurrying past this disagreeable spectacle, we come upon a strangely occupied group—a gallant young officer of the Royal Guard is working a piece of tapestry, while another in the scarlet uniform of the Swiss is delicately stitching at tambour-work. A little farther on we pass to a knot of grave, elderly men who are drawing out the threads of silk and silver from a piece of brocade, which they have brought in their pockets, and passing them on to some chattering demoiselles. Just near these is a group of ladies and gentlemen, each armed with a pair of scissors, busily cutting out pictures from books, ballads, almanacks,

which lie strewed about. The *découpure* is one of the most fashionable amusements of the day. These will be pasted upon screens and fans, then varnished and coloured: sometimes a series of them are placed together so as to form a scene, frequently grotesque enough from its odd combinations. On the carpet is a number of bags, or rather sacks, so large are they, of silk and velvet, containing a strange assortment—books, engravings, pieces of brocade, scissors, thimbles, needle-cases, patch-boxes, and rouge-pots. This is Madame's work-bag, without which she never goes abroad the gentlemen also have their bags, called *ridicules*, containing boxes of pastilles, bon-bons, scented snuff, in which they indulge largely, and various fashionable toys.

Poinsinet, in his comedy 'Le Cercle, ou la Soirée à la Mode' (1764), gives the following lively picture of a salon of the time: 'Ismène and Cidalise weary of a tri (a fashionable game at cards of the period), and not knowing whom to scandalise, bethink how they are to occupy themselves. Araminte, at her frame, finishes a flower in some tapestry; Cidalise carelessly takes a gold thread, draws a chair to her tambour, and, yawning, embroiders the trimming of a dress; while Ismène, reposing upon a couch, works at a *falbala de Marly* (a fashionable piece of dress of the day). A horse is heard to neigh, a lacquey announces, and the Marquis appears.

"How happy I am to find you, mesdames! But what do I see? How perfect these stitches are! How beautifully these flowers are shaded! It is the work of the Graces, of the fairies, or rather it is yours!" Then he draws a small case from his pocket, an article which assuredly one would not suspect him of carrying, selects a gold needle, takes some silk, and behold our Colonel working tapestry. They watch, admire him; but this is nothing—he leaves Araminte and her work and goes to Cidalise, takes away her tambour, and already his light hand is completing the form of a flower scarcely begun; then he darts across to the couch, and seizes an end of the *falbala*,' &c.

From these ephemera pass we on to graver scenes, to those assemblies wherein were forged the thunderbolts of the coming tempest, the mutterings of which even now assail the ears of that butterfly world, deaf to their meaning. They are so numerous, that it is difficult to know which to begin with. Suppose we select that of the Marquise du Châtelet; she is an aristocrat, and, above all, the mistress of the master spirit of the age, Voltaire. Here is a portrait of 'the sublime Emilie,' drawn by her cousin, Madame de Criqui, and certainly with no flattering pencil, although undoubt-

edly a tolerably correct one. 'She was a colossus in all proportions, a marvel of strength as a prodigy of awkwardness; she had terrible feet and formidable hands, a skin like a nutmeg-grater; in fine, the beautiful Emilie was very much like an ungainly porter, and to have permitted Voltaire to dare to speak of her beauty, algebra and geometry must have turned her brain.' To these charms were added a shrewish, exacting, and outrageously capricious temper; and yet Madame la Marquise had always two or three lovers—among the rest, the handsome and refined poet, St. Lambert. She was a very pronounced blue-stocking, delighted in the most abstruse subjects, and desired to pass for the possessor of profound learning; but somehow her reading would never digest, and would get incongruously mixed up into a sort of hotch-potch, very dreary and perplexing when it was ladled out for the benefit of her friends. Voltaire had passed his first youth ere he took up this liaison. The beautiful Emilie, whose intellectual proclivities never interfered with her carnal ones, cared nothing for him except in so far as she felt flattered in having so famous a man for a lover. In her salon he was master; not that Monsieur was dead—he was only a well-bred husband, who properly observed the *convenances* of the day, which forbade any interference with the liberty of the wife. What a strange contrast must have been presented between this coarse, dull-looking grenadier in petticoats, and that thin, shrunken figure, with its glittering eyes so full of genius, its sharp, marvelously mobile features, and its restless, mocking, malicious mouth; the one all flesh, the other all nerves and *esprit*. Literary men are seldom happy in their loves; the satirists have been particularly absurd, notably the present instance, Molière in la Brie, Pope in Martha Blount. I suppose it is a sort of Nemesis that renders them blind to the ridiculous side of their own actions, although so keenly perceptive of those of others. The Marquise's salon was the great resort of the friends and admirers of Voltaire—and those latter comprehended pretty well all French society—and above all of the Deists. Depend upon it, all the sharpest sallies, all the cleverest *mots* there were directed against the priests and Christianity.

It is a sign of the times that the hostesses of several of the most celebrated salons were ladies without claim to aristocratic birth, and who had risen from the bourgeois. Such a thing would have been impossible under the Grand Monarque; then the citizen never presumed to step above his level; or when he did, only became an object of ridicule, to be fleeced and laughed at by his aristocratic patrons like George Dandin and M. Jourdain, in Molière's comedies. But during the Regency and the earlier years

of Louis XV.'s reign, the middle class, from various causes, into which it does not come within the scope of this article to enter, had been rapidly rising to prominence and importance. The king chose his mistresses from the bourgeoisie; the wealthy *fermier-général*, low-born and vulgar, was everywhere received; birth was fast giving way to gold, not only in popular but in aristocratic appreciation.

Perhaps the most famous of all the Parisian salons of the middle of the eighteenth century was that of Madame Geoffrin. She was bourgeois by birth, and her husband had accumulated a large fortune by trade, which he left her at his death. No foreigner of position visited the French capital without paying his devoirs at her assemblies; they were as much a thing to be seen as the Louvre or Versailles. At foreign courts, by the King of Poland, by the Great Frederick, by Maria Theresa, by Catherine of Russia, she was an invited guest, and received with the most distinguished honour; and the same courtesy was even extended to her friends. Horace Walpole declared that she had one of the best understandings he had ever met, and more knowledge of the world. In another of his letters he says: 'Madame Geoffrin, of whom you have heard much, is an extraordinary woman, with more common sense than I almost ever met with; great quickness in discovering characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never fails in a likeness, seldom a favourable one. She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquires by a thousand little acts and offices of friendship; and by a freedom and severity which seems to be her sole end of drawing a concurrence to her, for she insists on scolding those she inveigles to her. She has little taste and less knowledge, but protects artisans and authors, and courts a few people to have the credit of serving her dependants.'

Quite a different assemblage have we here from that butterflies' bower we looked in upon just now. Not but that there are gold and embroidery, and silks and laces, and patches and powder here; for letters, and philosophy, and atheism are as much the fashion as tapestry, tambour work, and *découpure*; but these dainties are strongly contrasted with sober, shabby, and even slovenly costumes. Let me point out a few of the first celebrities who are the centres of the throng, and about each of whom a knot of individual admirers is gathered, eagerly listening to every word that drops from his lips, to be carried away and repeated tomorrow wherever the listener goes, either as a quotation of the last *mot* of scepticism, or as the product of the retailer's own

meditations. That very thin dandy who is talking so eagerly and dictatorially is M. le baron Grimm. It is not a pleasant face to look upon; its tanned and wrinkled surface is covered with white paint. He is nicknamed *Tyran-le-blanc*; he has a bitter and contemptuous mouth, and very large protruding eyes, in which there gleams at times a sinister light. He is a despot who has never loved anything in all his life except himself. There is no love lost among his acquaintances, but then he is a philosopher, and whatever he may or may not be besides is of little consequence to a man who bears that charmed title. He is chiefly remembered now by his sixteen volumes of voluminous correspondence, a gold mine to students of that age. That elegantly dressed gentleman, with the refined, intellectual, yet sensuous features, is M. Helvetius. He was formerly a *fermier-général*, but since he has written his celebrated book '*De l'Esprit*,' in which he attempts to prove that all human actions have no higher source than self-satisfaction, he has been enrolled among the *philosophes*. A far more remarkable personage, however, is that grave, cold, precise-looking man, a Jupiter Tonans of that terrible earthquake which, though yet more than a quarter of a century off, these gnomes are busily preparing. It is M. D'Alembert, one of the authors of '*L'Encyclopédie*,' that mighty and astounding monument of intellectual labour. He was found upon the steps of a church, when an infant, by a glazier, and brought up by the honest man as his own child. Madame de Tencin is supposed to be his mother. D'Alembert is a sceptic, and preaches the equality of all mankind, but he is exquisitely sensitive upon his obscure birth, and would probably prefer to be a very mediocre gentleman rather than a great philosopher. He is agreeable, polite, almost caressing to the aristocrats, whom he hates, and whose death-warrants he is signing with every stroke of that pen they so much admire. He is almost as much feared as Voltaire. He talks well, but with a tendency to preach. He is a man of profound learning, who can turn a sophism inside out, and illuminate its every falsity by his luminous intellect, yet he is most egregiously deceived by his mistress. Well, your greatest pundit is but a man after all. Near D'Alembert is a personage who in manner and appearance is in every particular his opposite, and yet who is so closely connected with him that their names will go down to posterity linked together, so that one will never be mentioned without suggesting the other; a coarse-looking, self-asserting man, but not without gleams of the divine fire, shabbily and slovenly dressed, with linen not too clean, and open at the throat. He is talking in a loud, blatant voice, with an occasional use of expressions at which even this not over-scrupu-

lous assembly look uneasy. This is Diderot. These two *philosophes* are terribly jealous of one another; their reputations are too nearly on a par. Presently a new-comer appears upon the scene. At a first glance one would take him for a respectable elderly tradesman, nothing more. He is about the middle height, stoops a little, but has a broad chest; he is dressed in a snuff-coloured suit and gray stockings, and has a shy and sensitive air: but from the homage paid him, even by the highest there, it is evident he is a person of some importance, and a second glance contradicts the first impression. The features, although regular, are common in their cast; the small sparkling eyes are shadowed by heavy brows; there is an infinite sweet sadness about the mouth; but over all there is an intellectual beauty, an ideality, such as anyone would instinctively associate with the author of '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*,' for it is Jean Jacques himself, that 'soul of fire,' the one genius of an age plethoric with talent; the one man who, amidst that crowd of materialists and levellers, passionately believes in the doctrine he preaches, and thence will more profoundly impress men's minds than all his confrères put together; thence will become, what indeed he is, the Evangelist of the Revolution. Voltaire is there, and among these constellations are a great many lesser stars: the sentimental St. Lambert, rival both of Rousseau and Voltaire in their love affairs; cold, pedantic Monsieur Marmontel; and there are court ladies and gentlemen than whom none are more fervid over *les droits de l'homme* and the 'noble savage;' these things are so charming in theory that they never bestow a thought upon how they would be in practice, but will know by-and-by. There are abbés also, in the garb of the Church, than whom none are more witty at the expense of sacred things, and none smile more delightedly at some blasphemous jest. The babel of tongues is as great as it was in the butterflies' bower, the courtesy a little less. The talk is heavy, and always upon the one eternal theme—infidelity, occasionally enlivened by some cutting sarcasm or mocking bon mot from Voltaire which all applaud and laugh at. Rousseau alone remains silent, brooding apart with dejected countenance, for in his strange morbid fashion he sees about him only enemies ready to work his destruction.

But Madame Geoffrin, far from being a blue-stocking, was in book-learning even ill educated. An Italian abbé offered to dedicate to her an Italian and French grammar. 'To me, sir, who do not know even how to spell!' 'Which,' says Marmontel in his Memoirs, 'was the simple truth. Her peculiar talent was that of telling a story well; in this she excelled, and willingly exerted herself to enliven the table, but without affectation, with-

out art, without pretension, solely to set the example; for she neglected none of the means she possessed to render her society agreeable.' Besides the large assemblies just described, held once or twice during the week, there were delightful *petits soupers* for especial favourites, seldom exceeding five or six: the fare was frugal,—a chicken, some spinach, and an omelette. After supper the author of 'Bélisaire' would read his frigid moralities, which, however, charmed an age that had always moral platitudes on its tongue, but no morality in its heart. 'I confess,' he writes, 'that no success ever flattered me so sensibly as that which these readings obtained in this little circle, where wit, taste, beauty, all the graces, were my judges, or rather my applauders. There was not a single trait either in my colouring or my dialogue, however minutely delicate and subtle, that was not forcibly felt, and the pleasure I gave had the air of enchantment. What enraptured me was, to see in such perfection the most beautiful eyes in the world swimming in tears at the little touching scenes in which I made love or nature weep.'

Peeping into a few more salons as we pass along, we shall find much the same company in all. Yet there is a certain distinctive character about each. For instance, Madame du Deffant will not receive the atheists, and interdicts at her reception all *too* pronounced attacks upon revealed religion. She is a pleasant, tolerant creature in her way, no longer young (she was a beauty in the days of the Regency), who laughs equally at the clergy and the philosophers, has every new thing read to her, makes soups and epigrams, and gives grand suppers once a week. These, with her moderate opinions, are the distinguishing traits of her assemblies. Supper, at which all the pleasantest and wittiest people congregate, is an institution over which she grows enthusiastic. 'Supper,' she says, 'is one of the essential conditions of man; take it away, and what remains to him?' The Baron Holbach, at Grandval, is another famous for the *petit souper*; but his assemblies are usually confined to the most advanced philosophers; his house is the head-quarters of the atheists. In spite of his opinions, the Baron has a good heart; he is generous, hospitable, and charitable. Never had the Jesuits a more implacable denouncer, yet in the days of their persecution he opened his doors to them and gave them shelter. Diderot, in his letters to Voland, gives some striking pictures of Grandval.

Madame Lespinasse is D'Alembert's mistress, and it is in her salon the great Encyclopédie is being fabricated. *Messieurs les rédacteurs* dine there every Wednesday, and then D'Alembert revises the articles of his contributors, softening pungent phrases, and

modifying the attacks upon religion. Madame is sometimes more than a looker-on; in her lover's absence she corrects proofs and gives advice. Hers is essentially the salon of the *Encyclopédistes*. Like Madame Geoffrin, she is a bourgeois, and was once a dependant upon Madame du Deffant. There is great animosity between them. Her connection with D'Alembert, it is said, is strictly platonic; but Marmontel describes her as possessing 'the most ardent soul, the most inflammable imagination, that has existed since the days of Sappho.' She fell passionately in love with more than one, and died for grief at the death of a young Spanish nobleman to whom she hoped to be married. Yet D'Alembert was inconsolable for her loss. 'She no longer lived for me,' he said, 'but I ever lived for her. Since she is no more, I know not why I live.' Yet, far from being beautiful, she was positively plain. It was her resistless fascination of manner that enslaved men's hearts.

Madame Doublet de Persan's is the especial resort of the scandal-mongers. Upon her table two huge registers are constantly kept open, in which are written all the news that can be gleaned by her and her associates; the one is devoted to authentic and incontestable, the other to doubtful and suspected, news. Monsieur Petit du Bachaumont is charged to compose from these an official record, which scandalous chronicle will thereafter be published under the title of '*Mémoires Secrets du Bachaumont*.' These doings will by-and-by give offence to the police, and the salon will be closed by order. The Duchesse de Choiseul, that 'little model in wax,' as Walpole calls her, the Maréchale du Luxembourg, another flame of Rousseau's, &c., entertain the philosophers, but these assemblies present no salient points differing essentially from those already described. At the Duchesse du Grammont's something of the old stately etiquette of the time of the Grand Monarque is still preserved. There the manners still retain that indefinable mixture of simplicity, elegance, grace, and urbanity; the productions of literature and art are discussed with interest, but without noise or dogmatism; arguments and disputes are almost unknown; the conversation is never heavy; and the refined man of letters mixes on an equal footing with the *noblesse*. It is the one calm spot in a universe of noise. Mark, however, that in all it is never Monsieur's but Madame's salon.

I have by no means yet exhausted the list of these places. There are some into the details of which it would be impossible to enter. The salons of the sisters Verrières, and of Guimard, the dancer, are gambling-houses—and worse; where, however, the Prince de Soubise does not disdain to do the honours. All the wit and fashion (male, at least) of the age visit them. And around

the apartments are constructed *loges*, like the private boxes of a theatre, for the accommodation of such great ladies as have not thrown aside all the *convenances* sufficiently to mingle in the throng, but who yet desire to witness the brilliant spectacle unseen. It was here that Count Jean du Barry first met Mdlle. l'Ange, the future Sultana of France. 'It is no dishonour,' writes Horace Walpole, 'to keep public gaming-houses; there are at least a hundred and fifty people of the first quality in Paris who live by it. You may go into their houses at all hours of the night, and find hazard, pharaoh, &c. The men who keep the hazard table at the Duke de Gesvres pay him twelve guineas each night for the privilege. Even the princesses of the blood are dirty enough to have shares in the banks kept at their houses.'

But no greater example could be given of the profound degradation into which the aristocracy was sinking than the Ramponneau rage. Ramponneau was the keeper of a low cabaret in the suburbs of Paris; his convivial disposition and coarse wit attracted an enormous custom to his house, and in the course of time his celebrity reached the court. Thereupon nobles, princes of the blood, and by-and-by even ladies, disguised themselves and visited the cabaretier to listen to and enjoy his ribald stories and gross conversation. Soon his songs and sayings were upon noble lips, male and female; he became the rage, and his name was given to every new fashion: furniture, sauces, dishes, articles of attire, everything was *à la Ramponneau*!

One of the strangest phenomena in all history is that of the French *noblesse* so industriously fanning the fire that was to consume them. Fatality alone could have so blinded them—as men and nations doomed to destruction have been blinded—to the consequences of their own conduct. Rousseau, D'Alembert, Diderot, the men who were preaching a crusade against the *ancien régime*, who declared all men to be equal, who never ceased to denounce all distinctions, and even society itself, as crimes against the common humanity, were their pets, their models; nay, they even joined themselves in the cry for their own destruction.

With the reign of Louis XVI. the new doctrines advanced with lightning speed. In the salons nothing was to be heard but the rights of man, liberty, equality, fraternity. No man or woman dared avow a belief in anything under pain of universal scorn and ridicule; even Voltaire came to be regarded as a bigot because he believed in God. All were preparing for the age of reason, sansculottism, and the grand holocaust of the Revolution, and no people worked more eagerly than the intended victims.

It came: and the society of the *ancien régime* was swept away.

Some Random Notes of an Idle Excursion.

BY MARK TWAIN.

IV.

THE early twilight of a Sunday evening in Hamilton, Bermuda, is an alluring time. There is just enough of whispering breeze, fragrance of flowers, and sense of repose to raise one's thoughts heavenward; and just enough amateur piano music to keep one reminded of the other place. There are many venerable pianos in Hamilton, and they all play at twilight. Age enlarges and enriches the powers of some musical instruments,—notably those of the violin,—but it seems to set a piano's teeth on edge. Most of the music in vogue there is the same that those pianos prattled in their innocent infancy: and there is something very pathetic about it when they go over it now in their asthmatic second childhood, dropping a note here and there, where a tooth is gone.

We attended evening service at the stately Episcopal church on the hill, where were five or six hundred people, half of them white and the other half black, according to the usual Bermudian proportions; and all well dressed—a thing which is also usual in Bermuda and to be confidently expected. There was good music—which we heard, and doubtless a good sermon—but there was a wonderful deal of coughing, and so only the high parts of the argument carried over it. As we came out after service, I overheard one young girl say to another: ‘Why, you don’t mean to say you pay duty on gloves and laces! I only pay postage; have them done up and sent in the “Boston Advertiser.”’

There are those who believe that the most difficult thing to create is a woman who can comprehend that it is wrong to smuggle; and that an impossible thing to create is a woman who will not smuggle, whether or no, when she gets a chance. But these may be errors.

We went wandering off toward the country, and were soon far down in the lonely black depths of a road that was roofed over with the dense foliage of a double rank of great cedars. There was no sound of any kind, there; it was perfectly still. It was so dark that one could detect nothing but sombre outlines. We strode farther and farther down this tunnel, cheering the way with chat. Presently the chat took this shape: ‘How insensibly the

character of a people and a government makes its impress upon a stranger, and gives him a sense of security or insecurity without his taking deliberate thought upon the matter or asking anybody a question! We have been in this land half a day; we have seen none but honest faces; we have noted the British flag flying, which means efficient government and good order; so without inquiry we plunge unarmed and with perfect confidence into this dismal place, which in almost any other country would swarm with thugs and garotters——'

'Sh! What was that? Stealthy footsteps! Low voices! We gasp, we close up together, and wait. A vague shape glides out of the dusk and confronts us. A voice speaks—demands money!

'A shilling, gentlemen, if you please, to help build the new Methodist church.'

Blessed sound! Holy sound! We contribute with thankful avidity to the new Methodist church, and are happy to think how lucky it was that those little coloured Sunday-school scholars did not seize with violence upon everything we had before we recovered from our momentary helpless condition. By the light of cigars we write down the names of weightier philanthropists than ourselves on the contribution-cards, and then pass on into the farther darkness, saying, What sort of a government do they call this, where they let little black pious children, with contribution-cards, plunge out upon peaceable strangers in the dark and scare them to death?

We prowled on several hours, sometimes by the sea-side, sometimes inland, and finally managed to get lost, which is a feat that requires talent in Bermuda. I had on new shoes. They were No. 7's when I started, but were not more than 5's now, and still diminishing. I walked two hours in those shoes after that, before we reached home. Doubtless I could have the reader's sympathy for the asking. Many people have never had the headache or the toothache, and I am one of those myself; but everybody has worn tight shoes for two or three hours, and known the luxury of taking them off in a retired place and seeing his feet swell up and obscure the firmament. Few of us will ever forget the exquisite hour we were married. Once when I was a callow, bashful cub, I took a plain, unsentimental country girl to a comedy one night. I had known her a day; she seemed divine; I wore my new boots. At the end of the first half-hour she said, 'Why do you fidget so with your feet?' I said, 'Did I?'—then I put my attention there and kept still. At the end of another half-hour she said, 'Why do you say, "Yes, oh yes!" and "Ha,

ha, oh, certainly! very true!" to "everything I say, when half the time those are entirely irrelevant answers?" I blushed, and explained that I had been a little absent-minded. At the end of another half-hour she said, 'Please, why do you grin so steadfastly at vacancy, and yet look so sad?' I explained that I always did that when I was reflecting. An hour passed, and then she turned and contemplated me with her earnest eyes and said, 'Why do you cry all the time?' I explained that very funny comedies always made me cry. At last human nature surrendered, and I secretly slipped my boots off. This was a mistake. I was not able to get them on any more. It was a rainy night; there were no omnibuses going our way; and as I walked home, burning up with shame, with the girl on one arm and my boots under the other, I was an object worthy of some compassion,—especially in those moments of martyrdom when I had to pass through the glare that fell upon the pavement from street lamps. Finally, this child of the forest said, 'Where are your boots?' and being taken unprepared, I put a fitting finish to the follies of the evening with the stupid remark, 'The higher classes do not wear them to the theatre.'

The Reverend had been an army chaplain during the war, and while we were hunting for a road that would lead to Hamilton he told a thing about two dying soldiers which interested me in spite of my feet. He said that in the Potomac hospitals rough pine coffins were furnished by government, but that it was not always possible to keep up with the demand; so, when a man died, if there was no coffin at hand, he was buried without one. One night late, two soldiers lay dying in a ward. A man came in with a coffin on his shoulder, and stood trying to make up his mind which of these two poor fellows would be likely to need it first. Both of them begged for it with their fading eyes,—they were past talking. Then one of them protruded a wasted hand from his blankets and made a feeble beckoning sign with the fingers,—to signify, 'Be a good fellow; put it under my bed, please.' The man did it, and left. The lucky soldier painfully turned himself in his bed until he faced the other warrior, raised himself partly on his elbow, and began to work up a mysterious expression of some kind in his face. Gradually, irksomely, but surely and steadily, it developed, and at last took definite form as a pretty successful wink. Then the sufferer fell back exhausted with his labour, but bathed in glory. Now entered a personal friend of No. 2, the despoiled soldier. No. 2 pleaded with him with eloquent eyes, till presently he understood, and removed the coffin from under No. 1's bed and put it under No. 2's. No. 2 indicated

his joy, and made some more signs; the friend understood again, and put his arm under No. 2's shoulder and lifted him up. Then the dying hero turned the dim exaltation of his eye upon No. 1, and began a slow and laboured work with his hands; gradually he lifted one hand up towards his face; it grew weak and dropped back again; once more he made the effort, but failed again. He took a rest; he gathered all the remnant of his strength, and this time he slowly but surely carried his thumb to the side of his nose, spread the gaunt fingers wide in triumph, and dropped back dead. That picture sticks by me yet. The 'situation' is unique.

The next morning, at what seemed a very early hour, the little white table-waiter appeared suddenly in my room and shot a single word out of himself: 'Breakfast!'

This was a remarkable boy in many ways. He was about eleven years old; he had alert, intent black eyes; he was quick of movement; there was no hesitation, no uncertainty about him anywhere; there was a military decision in his lip, his manner, his speech, that was an astonishing thing to see in a little chap like him; he wasted no words; his answers always came so quick and brief that they seemed to be part of the question that had been asked, instead of a reply to it. When he stood at table with his fly-brush, rigid, erect, his face set in a cast-iron gravity, he was a statue till he detected a dawning want in somebody's eye; then he pounced down, supplied it, and was instantly a statue again. When he was sent to the kitchen for anything, he marched upright till he got at the door; he turned hand-spring the rest of the way.

'Breakfast!'

I thought I would make one more effort to get some conversation out of this being.

'Have you called the Reverend, or are——'

'Yes, s'r!'

'Is it early, or is——'

'Eight-five!'

'Do you have to do all the "chores," or is there somebody to give you a l——!'

'Coloured girl!'

'Is there only one parish in this island, or are there——'

'Eight!'

'Is the big church on the hill a parish church, or is it——'

'Chapel-of-ease!'

'Is taxation here classified into poll, parish, town, and——'

'Don't know!'

Before I could cudgel another question out of my head, he was below, hand-springing across the back-yard. He had slid down

the balusters, head first. I gave up trying to provoke a discussion with him. The essential element of discussion had been left out of him; his answers were so final and exact that they did not leave a doubt to hang conversation on. I suspect that there is the making of a mighty man or a mighty rascal in this boy—according to circumstances—but they are going to apprentice him to a carpenter. It is the way the world uses its opportunities.

During this day and the next we took carriage drives about the island and over to the town of St. George's, fifteen or twenty miles away. Such hard, excellent roads to drive over are not to be found elsewhere out of Europe. An intelligent young coloured man drove us, and acted as guide-book. In the edge of town we saw five or six mountain-cabbage palms (atrocious name!) standing in a straight row, and equidistant from each other. These were not the largest or the tallest trees I have ever seen, but they were the stateliest, the most majestic. That row of them must be the nearest that nature has ever come to counterfeiting a colonnade. These trees are all the same height, say sixty feet; the trunks as grey as granite, with a very gradual and perfect taper; without sign of branch or knot or flaw; the surface not looking like bark, but like granite that has been dressed but not polished. Thus all the way up the diminishing shaft for fifty feet; then it begins to take the appearance of being closely wrapped, spool-fashion, with grey cord, or of having been turned in a lathe. About this point there is an outward swell, and thence upwards, for six feet or more, the cylinder is a bright, fresh green, and is formed of wrappings like those of an ear of green Indian corn. Then comes the great, spraying palm plume, also green. Other palm trees always lean out of the perpendicular, or have a curve in them. But the plumb-line could not detect a deflection in any individual of this stately row; they stand as straight as the colonnade of Baalbec; they have its great height, they have its gracefulness, they have its dignity; in moonlight or twilight, and shorn of their plumes, they would duplicate it.

The birds we came across in the country were singularly tame; even that wild creature the quail will pick around in the grass at ease while we inspected it and talked about it at leisure. A small bird of the canary species had to be stirred up with the butt end of the whip before it would move, and then it only moved a couple of feet. It is said that even the suspicious flea is tame and sociable in Bermuda, and will allow himself to be caught and caressed without misgivings. This should be taken with allowance, for doubtless there is more or less brag about it. In San Francisco they used to claim that their native flea could kick a child over, as if

it were a merit in a flea to be able to do that; as if the knowledge of it, trumpeted abroad, ought to entice immigration. Such a thing in nine cases out of ten would be almost sure to deter a thinking man from coming.

We saw no bugs or reptiles to speak of, and so I was thinking of saying in print, in a general way, that there were none at all; but one night after I had gone to bed, the Reverend came into my room carrying something, and asked 'Is this your boot?' I said it was, and he said he had met a spider going off with it. Next morning he stated that just at dawn the same spider raised his window and was coming in to get a shirt, but saw him and fled.

I inquired, 'Did he get the shirt?'

'No.'

'How did you know it was a shirt he was after?'

'I could see it in his eye.'

We inquired around, but could hear of no Bermudian spider capable of doing these things. Citizens said that their largest spiders could not more than spread their legs over an ordinary saucer, and that they had always been considered honest. Here was testimony of a clergyman against the testimony of mere worldlings—interested ones, too. On the whole, I judge it best to lock up my things.

Here and there on the country roads we found lemon, papaya, orange, lime, and fig-trees; also several sorts of palms—among them, the cocoa, the date, and the palmetto. We saw some bamboos forty feet high, with stems as thick as a man's arm. Jungles of the mangrove-tree stood up out of swamps, propped on their interlacing roots as upon a tangle of stilts. In drier places the noble tamarind sent down its grateful cloud of shade. Here and there the blossomy tamarisk adorned the roadside. There was a curiously gnarled and twisted black tree, without a single leaf on it. It might have passed itself off for a dead apple-tree but for the fact that it had a star-like, red-hot flower sprinkled sparsely over its person. It had the scatterly red glow that a constellation might have when glimpsed through smoked glass. It is possible that our constellations have been so constructed as to be invisible through smoked glass; if this is so, it is a great mistake.

We saw a tree that bears grapes; and just as calmly and unostentatiously as a vine would do it. We saw an india-rubber tree, but out of season, possibly, so there were no shoes on it, nor braces, nor anything that a person would expect to find there. This gave it an impressively fraudulent look. There was exactly one mahogany-tree on the island. I know this to be reliable, because I saw a man who said he had counted it many a time, and

could not be mistaken. He was a man with a hare lip and a pure heart, and everybody said he was as true as steel. Such men are all too few.

One's eye caught near and far the pink cloud of the oleander and the red blaze of the pomegranate blossom. In one piece of wild wood the morning-glory vines had wrapped the trees to their very tops, and decorated them all over with couples and clusters of great blue bells,—a fine and striking spectacle, at a little distance. But the dull cedar is everywhere, and its is the prevailing foliage. One does not appreciate how dull it is until the varnished bright green attire of the infrequent lemon-tree pleasantly intrudes its contrast. In one thing Bermuda is eminently tropical,—was in May, at least,—the unbrilliant, slightly faded, unrejoicing look of the landscape. For forests arrayed in a blemishless magnificence of glowing green foliage that seems to exult in its own existence and can move the beholder to an enthusiasm that will make him either shout or cry, one must go to countries that have malignant winters.

We saw scores of coloured farmers digging their crops of potatoes and onions, their wives and children helping,—entirely contented and comfortable, if looks go for anything. We never met a man, or woman, or child, anywhere in this sunny island, who seemed to be unprosperous, or discontented, or sorry about anything. This sort of monotony became very tiresome presently, and even something worse. The spectacle of an entire nation grovelling in contentment is an infuriating thing. We felt the lack of something in this community,—a vague, an undefinable, an elusive something, and yet a lack. But after considerable thought, we made out what it was,—tramps. Let them go there right now, in a body. It is utterly virgin soil. Passage is cheap; every true patriot in America will help buy tickets. Whole armies of these excellent beings can be spared from our midst and our polls; they will find a delicious climate and a green, kind-hearted people; there are potatoes and onions for all, and a generous welcome for the first batch that arrives and elegant graves for the second.

It was the Early Rose potato the people were digging. Later in the year they have another crop, which they call the Garnet. We buy their potatoes (retail) at fifteen dollars a barrel, and those coloured farmers buy ours for a song, and live on them. Havanna might exchange cigars with Connecticut in the same advantageous way if she thought of it.

We passed a roadside grocery with a sign up—'Potatoes Wanted.' An ignorant stranger, doubtless. He could not have gone thirty steps from his place without finding plenty of them.

In several fields the arrowroot crop was already sprouting. Bermuda used to make a vast annual profit out of this staple before fire-arms came into such general use.

The island is not large. Somewhere in the interior ahead of us a man had a very slow horse. I suggested that we had better go by him; but the driver said that the man had but a little way to go. I waited to see, wondering how he could know. Presently the man did turn down another road. I asked, 'How did you know he would?'

'Because I knew the man and where he lived.'

I asked him, satirically, if he knew everybody in the island; he answered very simply that he did. This gives a body's mind a good substantial grip on the dimensions of the place.

At the principal hotel in St. George's, a young girl with a sweet, serious face, said we could not be furnished with dinner since we had not been expected, and no preparation had been made. Yet it was still an hour before dinner-time. We argued, she yielded not; we supplicated, she was serene. The hotel had not been expecting an inundation of two people, so it seemed that we should have to go home dinnerless. I said we were not very hungry; a fish would do. My little maid answered that it was not the market-day for fish. Things began to look serious; but presently the boarder who sustained the hotel came in, and when the case was laid before him he was cheerfully willing to divide. So we had much pleasant chat at table about St. George's chief industry, the repairing of damaged ships; and in between we had a soup that had something in it that seemed to taste like the hereafter, but it proved to be only pepper of a particularly vivacious kind. And we had an iron-clad chicken that was very deliciously cooked, but not in the right way. Baking was not the thing to convince his sort. He ought to have been put through a quartz mill until the 'tuck' was taken out of him, and then boiled till we came again. We got a good deal of sport out of him, but not enough sustenance to leave the victory on our side. No matter; we had potatoes and a pie and a sociable good time. Then a ramble through the town, which is a quaint one, with interesting crooked streets and narrow, crooked lanes, with here and there a grain of dust. Here, as in Hamilton, the dwellings had Venetian blinds of a very sensible pattern. They were not double shutters, hinged at the sides, but a single broad shutter, hinged at the top; you push it outward from the bottom, and fasten it at any angle required by the sun or desired by yourself.

All about the island one sees great white scars on the hill-slopes. These are dished spaces where the soil has been scraped off and the

coral exposed and glazed with hard whitewash. Some of these are a quarter of an acre in size. They catch and carry the rainfall to reservoirs; for the wells are few and poor, and there are no natural springs and no brooks.

They say that the Bermuda climate is mild and equable, with never any snow or ice, and that one may be comfortable in our spring clothing the year round, there. We had delightful and decided summer weather in May, with a flaming sun that permitted the thinnest of raiment, and yet there was a constant breeze; consequently we were never discomforted by heat. At four or five in the afternoon the mercury began to go down, and then it was necessary to change to thick garments. I went to St. George's in the morning clothed in the thinnest of linen, and reached home at five in the afternoon with two overcoats on. The nights are said to be always cool and bracing. We had mosquito nets, and the Reverend said the mosquitoes persecuted him a good deal. I often heard him slapping and banging at these imaginary creatures with as much zeal as if they had been real. There are no mosquitoes in the Bermudas in May.

The poet Thomas Moore spent several months in Bermuda more than seventy years ago. He was sent out to be registrar of the Admiralty. I am not quite clear as to the function of a registrar of the Admiralty of Bermuda, but I think it is his duty to keep a record of all the admirals born there. I will enquire into this. There was not much doing in admirals, and Moore got tired and went away. A reverently preserved souvenir of him is still one of the treasures of the islands. I gathered the idea, vaguely, that it was a jug, but was persistently thwarted in the twenty-two efforts I made to visit it. However, it was no matter, for I found afterwards that it was only a chair.

There are several 'sights' in the Bermudas, of course, but they are easily avoided. This is a great advantage,—one cannot have it in Europe. Bermuda is the right country for a jaded man to 'loaf' in. There are no harassments; the deep peace and quiet of the country sink into one's body and bones, and give his conscience a rest, and chloroform the region of invisible small devils that are always trying to whitewash his hair. A good many Americans go there about the first of March and remain until the early spring weeks have finished their villainies at home.

The Bermudians are hoping to have telegraphic communication with the world soon; but even after they shall have acquired this curse it will still be a good country to go to for a vacation, for there are charming little islets scattered about the inclosed sea where one could live secure from interruption. The telegraph boy

would have to come in a boat, and one could easily kill him while he was making his landing.

We had spent four days in Bermuda,—three bright ones out-of-doors and one rainy one in the house, we being disappointed about getting a yacht for a sail; and now our furlough was ended.

We made the run home to New York quarantine in three days and five hours, and could have gone right along up to the city if we had had a health permit. But health permits are not granted after seven in the evening, partly because a ship cannot be inspected and overhauled with exhaustive thoroughness except in daylight, and partly because health officers are liable to catch cold if they expose themselves to the night air. Still, you can *buy* a permit after hours for five dollars extra, and the officer will do the inspecting next week. Our ship and passengers lay under expense and in humiliating captivity all night, under the very nose of the little official reptile who is supposed to protect New York from pestilence by his vigilant 'inspections.' This imposing rigour gave everybody a solemn and awful idea of the beneficent watchfulness of our government, and there were some who wondered if anything finer could be found in other countries. In the morning we were all a-tiptoe to witness the intricate ceremony of inspecting the ship. But it was a disappointing thing. The health officer's tug ranged alongside for a moment, our purser handed the lawful three-dollar permit fee to the health officer's boat-black, who passed us a folded paper in a forked stick, and away we went. The entire 'inspection' did not occupy thirteen seconds.

The health officer's place is worth a hundred thousand dollars a year to him. His system of inspection is perfect, and therefore cannot be improved on; but it seems to me that his system of collecting his fees might be amended. For a great ship to lie idle all night is a most costly loss of time; for her passengers to have to do the same thing works to them the same damage, with the addition of an amount of exasperation and bitterness of soul that the spectacle of the health officer's heart on a fork could hardly sweeten. Now, why would it not be better and simpler to let the ships pass in unmolested, and the fees and permits be exchanged once a year by post?

The Ballad of Prose and Rhyme.

WHEN the roads are heavy with mire and rut,
 In November fogs, in December snows,
 When the North Wind howls, and the doors are shut,—
 There is place and to spare for the pains of prose ;
 But whenever a scent from the whitethorn blows,
 And the jasmine-stars at the lattice climb,
 And a Rosalind-face at the casement shows,
 Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
 When the reason stands on its squarest toes,
 When the mind (like a beard) has a 'formal cut,'—
 There is place and to spare for the pains of prose ;
 But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,
 And the young year draws to the 'wanton prime,'—
 Whenever Sir Romeo courting goes,
 Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

In a theme where the thoughts didactic strut,
 In a changing quarrel of 'Ayes' and 'Noes,'
 In a starched procession of 'If' and 'But,'—
 There is place and to spare for the pains of prose ;
 But whenever a soft glance softer grows,
 And the birds are glad in the pairing time,
 And the secret is told 'that no one knows,'
 Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

ENVOY.

In the valley of life,—for its needs and woes,
 There is place and to spare for the pains of prose ;
 But whenever the joy-bells clash and chime,
 Then hey !—for the ripple of laughing rhyme !

AUSTIN DOBSON.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NEWS FROM CHINA.

FROM the day on which Raymond came and went so suddenly there fell a change on Nelly, and, as it seemed, for the better. She no longer affected her own company, or sought seclusion; her manner was cheerful, though a close observer might have thought it studiously so; she rather encouraged than otherwise her hostess's little expeditions of pleasure. One day, when Mr. Wardlaw was with them, she said, 'Suppose we dine at the *table d'hôte*?'

This unexpected suggestion was received with rapture. Mrs. Wardlaw was one of those persons who delight in dining in public; it was to her an innocent method of 'seeing life,' and she flattered herself that it expanded her mind. Her husband thought it a decidedly preferable notion to that of dining in their own room—which, however, for their guest's sake, he would have continued, to do quite contentedly. His habits were eminently social, and heretofore he had only indulged himself with a nightly pipe in the public billiard-room.

The *table d'hôte* at the hotel was a new institution, but it was said to work well; which was the least that could be expected of it, since it certainly worked ill for those who took their meals in private. The staff of waiters was limited, and while the public dinner was in progress, 'attendance' was difficult to procure elsewhere; while if you dined afterwards you got the warmed-up soup, the *réchauffé* cutlets, and the 'leavings' generally of the common table. The newly married couples who shrank from the public eye had doubtless consolations of their own for this neglect and ill-treatment, but Mr. and Mrs. Wardlaw were by no means a newly married couple, and liked their food hot and at first hand; so Nelly's proposition was eminently agreeable to them.

The seats of honour—that is, those at the head of the table—were filled as usual by the longest established guests, while the newcomers were placed by themselves at the other end. Opposite the Wardlaws' little party of three were some university men and their tutor and next to them a young couple, who were by the company at once set down as 'turtle doves' recently united. The

bird was so common in the locality, that that view of their relation was very excusable; especially as there was no family likeness between them. The man was bronzed and dark, while the lady was fair; and the former was very attentive to the latter. Still, Mrs. Wardlaw had a doubt about their relationship to one another, and expressed it.

'You may be right, my dear; you generally are upon such matters,' was her husband's whispered reply. 'If they are man and wife, it is certain the wedding must have been very recent; for the lady is so civil to him.'

When they returned to their sitting-room, Nelly was asked her opinion on the matter.

'I did not observe them very particularly,' said she.

'Her attention was absorbed by the Oxford gentlemen,' observed Mr. Wardlaw wickedly.

'In that case, I am sure that it was reciprocal,' answered his wife, carrying on this little joke; 'even the tutor was smitten; I heard him sigh over his apple dumpling. But none of those young men was to be compared with the personage we are discussing.'

'Do you mean the gentleman or the lady?'

'What nonsense, John! of course I mean the gentleman. A more washed-out uninteresting-looking creature than the woman I never beheld.'

Mr. Wardlaw laughed and rattled the silver in his pockets.

'Now, do you know what he's thinking, Nelly?' continued her hostess; 'that no woman can ever admire another woman. To punish him, let us send him off to make inquiries; and don't you come back, sir, till you discover what relation exists between those two people. You will find the man in the billiard-room, of course, in any case—unless he is much better than most husbands.'

In an hour or so Mr. Wardlaw came back, looking unusually grave.

'They are brother and sister,' was his report. 'Did you ever hear of the name of Milburn, Nelly?'

'Never, Mr. Wardlaw.'

'Well, he has heard of yours. He has just come from China, it seems.'

'What? Did he know poor papa?' asked Nelly, flushing.

'Oh yes, he was in the same regiment. He seemed very much interested when I told him who you were; and I said, I thought you might wish to talk to him.'

'Yes, indeed, I should like to do so.'

'In that case he will pay a visit to us to-morrow morning; so *that's* settled.'

When Nelly had retired to her room, considerably excited by this incident, her host and hostess had a little further talk about it.

'Well, John, and what do you think of this Mr. Milburn?'

'Oh, he seems a nice young fellow enough. He has come home, it appears, upon urgent private affairs, his uncle having died and made him his heir.'

'Dear me! then he has money?'

'Lot's of it: so much that he has been obliged to ask his sister to help him spend it. That was the woman we saw at dinner. There are the foundations, my dear, and now you can set to work and build your edifice.'

To this sarcastic observation Mrs. Wardlaw made no reply at the moment, but buried herself in the 'Saturday Review,' from whose columns, after half an hour or so, she emerged, with the vague remark, 'Well, it seems to me it would be the best for her, poor darling;' and lighting her flat candle, marched up to bed.

In the forenoon of the next day Mr. Henry Milburn paid a formal call, nominally on Mrs. Wardlaw, but in reality on Nelly herself, her hostess of course being present. He was not quite the same young fellow—to look at—as we knew him in China, because his English tailor had turned him out in the height of the summer fashion. The 'puggaree,' and the open shirt-front, and the linen clothes had vanished; but his manly air and handsome face, from which the 'tan' had only just begun to fade, were as attractive as ever. His manner, naturally so frank, was a little constrained, and at the same time touched with tenderness; for he felt for the poor orphan girl to whom he had so sad a story to tell of her dead father, and from whom too he had to conceal so much that could not be told.

'It is very good of you, Mr. Milburn, to pay this visit to mere strangers,' said Mrs. Wardlaw with her best 'company manners.'

'Not strangers,' said he gently; 'for I have heard my dear friend Captain Conway speak of both you and your husband; and as to Miss Conway, she of course—' and instead of ending his sentence, he respectfully pressed her hand.

Nelly murmured some words of thanks: she was greatly moved, for here stood one who had seen her father almost at the very last, and could perhaps say something about him which Mr. Pennicueik had left unsaid. It still seemed to her most strange that he should have died without a word of farewell, and she had a vague hope that this man might bring one, or at all events explain that *mysterious* silence.

'Your father was captain of my company, Miss Conway, and the best friend I had in the regiment, though indeed he was everybody's friend.'

'And you were with him up to the time he left Shanghae on that fatal journey?'

'Oh yes,'—he was going to say, 'and even later,' but stopped short, remembering, with a quick shudder, what that last sight had been. 'Mr. Pennicuick, you know, accompanied him alone; but afterwards, when he returned in hopes to save him, and procure the reprieve that was unhappily useless, I went back with him to Dhulang. That was the name of the pris—the place where your poor father got into trouble.'

'We could never understand that,' said Nelly sadly: 'I mean, how my father, of all men, could have committed——'

'Nor I,' broke in Milburn suddenly, 'nor anybody who knew him. The whole thing was a mystery, and still remains so.'

'Unhappily, however, what happened afterwards was certain enough.'

'Yes.'

Never was monosyllable more fraught with significance.

'You reached Dhulang too late? You never saw him?'

Milburn shook his head. 'He perished before our arrival, thanks to the treachery of the Chinese government. I trust they will still be made to pay for it; but it is so difficult to punish the true transgressors in such cases. Moreover, supposing the facts to be as reported, it was not a *casus belli*.'

'I am sure my poor father would have wished no war to be made on his account,' said Nelly earnestly.

'That is quite true. He was gentleness itself, though as bold as a lion, and had always a keen sense of responsibility. But as for me, when I saw—I mean, when I heard what had taken place, I should have liked to have burnt that temple about its rascally priests' ears, and ——' The young fellow said no more, remembering that he stood in the presence of women, but his flushed cheek and flaming eyes filled up the sentence for him.

'There are some things that make me wish to be a man,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, clenching her fat fists. 'But what I don't understand, and what I think we none of us understand, is the part Mr. Pennicuick took in this unhappy business. Can you tell us about that, Mr. Milburn?'

Nelly looked up surprised, and with a little flush; she had no idea that Mrs. Wardlaw concerned herself with Mr. Pennicuick, and if she did so she would have thought her regard for Raymond would have prevented her from saying anything to his father's pre-

judice. It was, on the contrary, Mrs. Wardlaw's affection for the young man that made her detest Ralph Pennicuick for his conduct towards him; but to Nelly, just at this time, her remark seemed very *malàpropos*.

'Well, Mrs. Wardlaw,' observed Milburn, in answer to her tone rather than her words, 'I confess I did not like Pennicuick myself. He seemed a cold self-conscious sort of fellow. I never knew him well, however. Of course,' added he, turning to Nelly, 'there must have been something attractive about him, or your father and he could never have been so intimate.'

Nelly bowed her head, not knowing what to say in Mrs. Wardlaw's presence, who was acquainted with poor Mrs. Conway's detestation of the man; and her hostess answered for her.

'Yes, that was a strange thing, for nobody else seems to have had much love for him. He has a son, indeed, who is a very nice young fellow—that is all I have ever heard of nice belonging to him.'

'Indeed! He never spoke to any of us of his having a son.'

'I dare say not,' said Mrs. Wardlaw scornfully. 'He was afraid of being made to look old. He is proud enough, but not proud of the only thing he has really to be proud of.'

'Go it!' observed Mr. Wardlaw cheerfully, and speaking for the first time. 'If you want a man to go dirt cheap, no matter how high his own opinion of himself, let a woman who don't like him put him up to auction.'

'I think you are inclined to be a little hard upon our friend, Mrs. Wardlaw.'

'He is not *my* friend, Mr. Milburn, I do assure you,' interrupted that lady.

'Then I may the more honestly call you hard on him,' exclaimed the young man, smiling, 'since I have a feeling of antagonism against him myself. There was only one thing indeed that I liked about him, but as that very thing was connected with the matter under discussion, I think it in justice ought to be mentioned. As to what happened before the deplorable catastrophe took place I of course know nothing—nobody can know anything—except from his own lips, which can scarcely be expected to speak unfavourably of his own part in the matter; but afterwards, when he and I were at Dhulang, his conduct was more than praiseworthy.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, in a tone which unmistakably implied either the reverse of the words she used, or incredulity. 'I should like to hear, however, what Mr. Pennicuick did that was so much to his credit.'

Mr. Milburn did not answer; he was piqued by the speaker's manner, and it was also plainly impossible for him to reply catego-

rically to such a question. Perhaps he would have kept silence on the subject altogether had not Nelly herself said, 'I should like to know, Mr. Milburn, all you can tell me that does not give you pain.'

'I will say, then, Miss Conway, that so far as doing honour to your poor father's memory—which was all that was left for him to do—Mr. Pennicuick spared nothing. It seems a small thing to mention money in such a case, but the man we speak of is not liberal; he had in our regiment, though he had been with us so short a time, rather the character of being the reverse.'

'He has that at home,' observed Mrs. Wardlaw the irrepressible.

'Well, that being the case,' continued the young man, 'it was all the more credit to him that on the occasion I speak of he was more than liberal; he was lavish. The cost of what he did, and he did much, did not seem to affect him at all; while as for his personal feelings of regret—so far as one can judge of such things in another—they were most acute and genuine. I cannot in fact picture a man's performing the last duties to a lost friend with more generosity and devotion.'

'You have taken a great weight from my mind, Mr. Milburn,' said Nelly gravely, 'and I am the more obliged to you since you have shown it was quite misplaced.' There was a little pause, during which Milburn bowed and Mrs. Wardlaw sniffed disapprobation. Then the visitor, perceiving one of Nelly's unfinished drawings on its easel, turned the conversation to that topic. He drew a little himself, it seemed, and was very fond of that occupation. When he rose to go, 'I hope,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, 'that we may have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of your sister.'

'If you would be good enough to call,' answered Mr. Milburn, 'I should deem it a kindness to her.'

Upon the whole, their new acquaintance was felt to be an acquisition. 'I don't think much of the sister,' said Mrs. Wardlaw; 'she looks "stuck up," to my mind, but it is one of the penalties of knowing nice gentlemen that one must needs know their female relatives also.' From which observation it will be gathered that this lady had in that very limited time either got accustomed to her carriage, or had learnt a little of the mode of 'riding the high horse.'

'When one knows nice ladies,' observed Mr. Wardlaw drily, 'I have noticed that it is necessary to introduce them to one's wife, or else there is a row.'

Nelly was deep in thought, and her host forbore to appeal to

her, as it was his humour to do, for corroboration of his views. Her late interview had had a melancholy charm for her, and she looked forward with genuine interest to seeing Mr. Milburn again. When she had gone upstairs, Mrs. Wardlaw remarked to her husband that she thought the young people had decidedly taken to one another.

‘Your edifice has reached its first story, has it?’ said he, laughing.

‘Well, why not? Since she has given poor Raymond up, I see no objection to Mr. Milburn.’

‘I am glad of it, my dear. I was afraid you would be rather down upon the young gentleman for his advocacy of Mr. Pennicuick.’

‘Not at all, John. Mr. Pennicuick’s conduct to the dead may be quite irreproachable—I know nothing about that—for you know he didn’t think proper to attend poor Mrs. Conway’s funeral; all I say is that his behaviour to his fellow-creatures while they are alive is eminently unsatisfactory; and nothing that Mr. Milburn, or anyone else, can ever say to the contrary will alter my opinion.’

‘I am quite sure of that, my dear,’ observed her husband confidently, and resumed his perusal of the doings at the auction mart in yesterday’s ‘Times.’

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

THE promised call upon Miss Milburn was made that very afternoon; her residence was in the same quarter of the little hotel, and of course under the same roof, so that it became a great question of etiquette with Mrs. Wardlaw whether they should put their bonnets on for the ceremony. After much consideration this was decided in the affirmative, and she and Nelly equipped themselves for out-of-doors, and then sailed down the passage to their port—about four doors off. They found brother and sister both ‘at home.’ Perhaps the former had remained within in order to receive them, as it was his custom to spend his whole time out-of-doors, whereas Miss Milburn, on the contrary, was rather a hot-house flower. She had more pretensions to good looks than Mrs. Wardlaw had shown herself willing to allow, but by day she looked considerably older than under the gaslight of the *table d’hôte*.

‘No chicken, my dear,’ was Mrs. Wardlaw’s subsequent verdict on her in confidence to Nelly, and she was certainly some years senior to her brother. There was, as has been said, no family resemblance between them, and the contrast of his sunburnt cheeks

with her pale and somewhat freckled features, made the dissimilarity even stronger than nature had done. She was straight as a poplar, and rather of its colour, but not without a certain grace of movement, which seemed however to be studied. Her eyes were grey and very expressive; her voice soft and even musical; her features very clear cut—they were politely called ‘classical’ by her admirers—but her lips were thin, and she seemed to smile rather to show her excellent teeth than her good nature.

She received her visitors, however, very graciously: indeed, with a greater demonstration than her brother, who seemed more silent and reserved than he had been when he had made his own ‘call’ that morning. The usual topics were discussed; the climate of Sandybeach: the hotel and its *table d’hôte*; and the scenery.

‘My brother tells me you draw, Miss Conway.’

‘A little,’ answered Nelly modestly.

‘Oh dear! I thought you were an artist—indeed, quite a professional.’

‘That is very true,’ said Nelly, colouring. ‘I hope to gain my living by my brush; but at present I am but a beginner.’

Mr. Milburn coloured also till his bronzed cheek grew almost black. But he said nothing.

Mrs. Wardlaw too looked annoyed.

‘I hope I have not been indiscreet,’ continued Miss Milburn with concern. ‘I thought Mr. Wardlaw told you, Herbert—’

‘Then he had no business to tell him,’ observed Mrs. Wardlaw decisively.

‘But why not, my dear Mrs. Wardlaw?’ said Nelly, smiling. ‘If he did say I hoped to become a professional artist, it was quite true.’

‘If you are interested in drawings, Miss Conway, there are some in this portfolio,’ said Mr. Milburn, and Nelly rose and went to it.

Miss Milburn showed her teeth—for the smile she put on did not extend beyond them—and began to talk to Mrs. Wardlaw about her horses (for the new carriage had come down to Sandybeach), which she had seen that morning on the sands and professed to admire exceedingly.

‘We should have brought our own down,’ she said, ‘if we had been certain of the duration of our stay; and then the hills are a consideration. They pull one’s horses to pieces—don’t you think so?’

‘My horses are not in pieces,’ answered Mrs. Wardlaw.

‘Oh, perhaps they are accustomed to a hilly country.’

‘Perhaps,’ was the unexpected reply; but it was quite true that Mrs. Wardlaw didn’t know whether they were or not.

would be sure to have made several before he fell into the hands of those wretches.'

'If he did, where are they?'

'Perhaps Mr. Pennicuick has sold them,' suggested Mrs. Wardlaw.

'Oh, for shame, my dear friend! I am sure you cannot say that seriously.'

'I only said "perhaps," my dear. Anything is possible, in my humble opinion, with respect to that man.'

The reason of which extreme antagonism might be thus explained: she had disliked Mr. Pennicuick, to begin with, and all that Mrs. Conway had said to her against him had a double force now that she was dead; she had especially disliked him for his treatment of her favourite Raymond; and when he set himself, as she knew he had, against his son's marrying her beloved Nelly, she absolutely loathed him. It was true that she herself had now other views for the girl, but they had been necessitated by Ralph Pennicuick's conduct, and in carrying them out her conscience pricked her, on Raymond's account, and made his father more detestable to her even than before.

'I don't like to hear you say such things,' said Nelly, 'when the facts, as we have just heard from Mr. Milburn, not only do not warrant them, but all point the other way.'

'I know if your poor mother was alive she would hold the same view of him that I do.'

This was a strategic stroke, but hardly a fair one; the proper answer was that Mrs. Conway had hugged her prejudices as though they had been her children, notwithstanding that some of them were quite grown up (this one against Ralph Pennicuick, for example, had been born before Nelly was); but of course Nelly was precluded from this reply.

After a short pause, she said, 'And what do you think of Miss Milburn?'

'Well, my dear Nelly, at the risk of being thought uncharitable twice in one day, I must confess that I don't like her. Perhaps it is that my intimacy with your dear self of late has placed all other young women at a disadvantage in my eyes—I never pay compliments, my darling; it is the sober truth—I say perhaps I have unconsciously contrasted this lady with yourself, and she has suffered accordingly; but certainly she has fallen far short of my expectations, which were founded of course on what we had seen of her brother. I think she is pretentious; proud of her money—or rather of her brother's money, for it seems it is all his—and desperately alarmed lest anybody else should get hold of it.'

How clever you must have been, my dear Mrs. Wardlaw,' laughed Nelly, 'to find all that out in ten minutes! She must have been very candid and communicative.'

'She was neither, my dear; nor am I clever, as you very well know. But she held her hand a little too low, and—as I can never help doing when John and I play at cribbage together—I looked over it.'

'That was very wrong,' said Nelly, much amused at this confession.

'Well, if one has eyes, one must use them. It is money that has brought these two together. I don't believe she cared twopence about her brother till he became rich; and she only cares for him now because he is so. Her whole object in life is to keep him—that is, his money—to herself.'

'But who on earth is going to rob her of him—or it?' inquired Nelly.

'Well, she suspects everybody, no doubt, but just at present *you*.'

'Me?'

'Certainly. You are young and pretty; and she thinks (and she is doubtless right) that her brother admires you. She wishes you were at York, or still better at Jericho; anywhere else, in short, than at Sandybeach, under the same roof with him; you should have seen her green eyes——'

'They are grey,' put in Nelly quietly.

'They are green when she is jealous, and it was with jealous eyes that she kept watch over you and him (out of the corners of them) the whole time she was talking with me. You heard her rude remarks about your being an artist by trade.'

'I don't think she meant any rudeness, Mrs. Wardlaw.'

'She did; but that was not her chief object: she made that speech for her brother's benefit, and her intention was to point out to all concerned that you were very poor, and consequently not to be thought of seriously by a young man of his fortune.'

'My dear Mrs. Wardlaw, you make me very uncomfortable by talking of such things, which I am sure have no existence save in your own mind. It is your affection for me, I know, which prompts you to believe I am of such importance—or indeed of any importance—to other people; but you are not only doing Miss Milburn wrong, but giving me pain.'

'Then I am a brute beast, my darling, and will be dumb accordingly.'

'But I like to hear you talk, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, if you only won't suppose that every young man wants to marry me.'

‘Now there! I never said they did—though of course they do: I only said that Miss Milburn thought so. Well, then, to drop that subject (though it was *the* thing she had in her mind, for all that) she told me that “dear Herbert” was in doubt about returning to China or not. Of course he had a great position in this country, but on the other hand it was so necessary for a young man to have some occupation: being in the army kept a man out of harm’s way. It doesn’t, my dear, as you, alas! have good cause to know; but what she meant was that, out in China, it is likely “dear Herbert” will remain single, or perhaps succumb to the climate.’

‘It strikes me, my dear Mrs. Wardlaw,’ said Nelly, laughing, ‘that you have succumbed to the Sandybeach climate, and are getting a little—shall I venture to say—“gritty”?’

‘If you will have it so, my dear. The sand gets everywhere, and perhaps has penetrated the—what do you call it?—the spleen.’

The two ladies had a hearty laugh, which is not only the best deodoriser for all unwholesome ‘breezes’ between friends, but where there has been no breeze, and only an unpleasantness in the way of allusion to a delicate topic, disperses the little clouds and makes all blue again. Only, to use a very common phrase for a thing that affects everybody, whether common or otherwise—by ‘putting it into’ Nelly’s ‘head’ that Miss Milburn was afraid of her brother falling in love with her, Mrs. Wardlaw had made her very uncomfortable, and quite destroyed the pleasure that she had derived from that young gentleman’s acquaintance. Nor was her embarrassment diminished when, on coming home from her drive, she found in No. 8, not only the promised portfolio, but something in paper directed to herself, ‘with Mr. Milburn’s compliments’ outside it, that turned out to be her father’s sketch, and which of course he had thus sent her as a present.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TWO SKETCHES.

It was a satisfaction to Nelly to find that, after they had parted from their new acquaintances, Mr. Milburn had received a letter by the afternoon post which necessitated his immediate presence in London; since his absence gave her time to consider whether she ought to accept his proffered gift. He had said that he highly prized her father’s sketch, but his good feeling might very easily suggest that the daughter of his dead friend would prize it more; and it really seemed ungracious to refuse it. It was no ordinary case of a complimentary present which could be declined or other-



'She was looking on her father's grave.'



wise without any show of feeling. Had it not been for Mrs. Wardlaw's remarks, she would have had no doubt upon the matter; she would have accepted the picture in the same kindly, reverent spirit in which (she felt sure) it had been offered her, and also, of course, with genuine gratitude. Even now she had not been grievously disturbed by her friend's view of her relation to Mr. Milburn in his sister's eyes; but it had certainly embarrassed her.

In the mean time, since Miss Milburn was alone, the Wardlaws sent a polite message to ask her to join their party at the *table d'hôte*, which of course included an invitation for the rest of the evening. 'Civility costs nothing,' was Mrs. Wardlaw's confidential remark to Nelly, 'and you may depend upon it she won't come.'

Much to that lady's confusion, however, she did come, and with that evident intention of making herself agreeable which is so overwhelming. Moreover, she affected an air of self-depreciation with which not the most consummate tact can deal. It was so kind of them to take compassion upon a deserted creature like herself, who had no accomplishments to repay them for their welcome, and who had no claim upon their hospitality whatever!

Mr. Wardlaw thought she alluded to the expenses they might be put to in her entertainment, and hastened to explain that all they had in the evening was a sort of tea-cake procured in the village by his 'Missus' (as he familiarly termed Mrs. Wardlaw) at a very reasonable rate.

'Oh no,' answered Miss Milburn in correction of this error, 'it is not the cost that I refer to, but the kindness: one does not judge a thing by its mere *worth*, you know.'

Mr. Wardlaw shook his head; he felt that he and his guest had some different standard of value for things, but did his best to agree with her by saying 'No, no, it's what things will *fetch*, isn't it, miss?' Perceiving that he had made a mistake again, he hastened to express his admiration for a certain diamond ring of ancient workmanship she wore, of the value of which under the hammer he had already made an approximate estimate in his own mind.

'It was one of Herbert's gifts,' she said, 'when he came into his property.' It had been a sort of heirloom in the family for centuries, but nevertheless he had insisted upon her taking possession of it. She had replied, 'Only as a loan, Herbert; when you bring home your bride to the Old Hall, this ring shall have its proper place upon her finger.'

'I shouldn't give it up in a hurry if I were you,' observed Mr. Wardlaw practically.

'Indeed,' returned she, 'providing it be a fitting recipient—one

who has been used by birth and fortune to wear such ornaments—nothing would give me greater pleasure.’

‘You don’t say so!’ said Mr. Wardlaw innocently: ‘now, my view would be just the contrary. If I were in your case, and my brother married a rich wife, I should say to myself, “Well, she’s got plenty of rings, and don’t want this one;” but if she was a poor girl, then it would be very pleasant to give her such a ring as that, to be the first perhaps she had ever worn.’

‘I am afraid our views upon such a subject are not likely to assimilate,’ said Miss Milburn stiffly: after which he felt equal to no more conversation with her until after his second glass of champagne.

To the ladies Miss Milburn was very confidential: she informed them that ‘dear Herbert’ was worried to death by lawyers, who had dragged him up to town that very day on matters connected with ‘the estate.’ He hated business, and she feared he was often imposed upon; his nature was so frank and cordial that he was really no match for anybody that was at all designing. ‘I feel as angry with people that endeavour to get the better of him in any way, as though they were taking advantage of a child.’

‘He is a very fine child,’ observed Mrs. Wardlaw.

Miss Milburn glanced at her with her keen grey eye, but could not quite make out whether she was in jest or earnest.

‘Yes, Herbert is very handsome. That is an additional source of anxiety to me; for more than once—even in the few weeks since he has been at home—he has attracted—girls will be girls, you know—a little too much admiration from young ladies, and that without the least “design” on their parts: they did not know he was rich, or their good feeling would have prevented them giving way to such weakness; and they learnt it too late I fear for their peace of mind.’

‘I hope they did not die?’ observed Mrs. Wardlaw innocently. The concern expressed in her good-natured face was once more too much for her new acquaintance, who could not of course understand that she had taken unwonted refuge in sarcasm from anger upon Nelly’s account, for whose benefit she felt certain that these anecdotes were narrated.

‘I did not mean to say that it had any such serious effect,’ explained Miss Milburn, ‘but the whole affair was unfortunate! On the one side, there was a sense of humiliation—if nothing deeper—and on the other—well, of course Herbert was sorry, although he had nothing to reproach himself with.’

‘How much has he a year?’ inquired Mrs. Wardlaw simply. ‘Well, really,’ said Miss Milburn, ‘that is rather a home-

question. His estate is in land, and therefore cannot be estimated by its mere worth.'

'There she is again,' murmured Mr. Wardlaw to himself. 'I wonder how she does calculate things?'

Perhaps he could not help expressing this curiosity in his countenance, for Miss Milburn added, 'What I mean is, that the social position of a great landholder is not to be measured by his rent-roll. People in commerce, for example, may have a larger income, and yet be in every way inferior.'

'But what is his rent-roll?' inquired Mrs. Wardlaw, with innocent importunity.

'I suppose it is not less than four thousand a year,' replied Miss Milburn.

'Well, then, you ought to ticket him: "To young ladies and others: To prevent disappointment, it is hereby notified that this attractive gentleman is possessed of three or four thousand a year in land." Don't you think that would be a good plan?'

Then Miss Milburn perceived that she had been going a little too far in her Notice to Trespassers, and vouchsafed a smile. Not that she was amused by the pleasantry, but she felt that, if she took any offence at it, her brother would come to hear of the matter.

'I dare say, Mrs. Wardlaw, you think me foolishly fond of Herbert, and that I imagine every young woman is setting her cap at him—but then, you know, he has only me to look to, and I feel *such* a sense of responsibility!'

Nelly fortunately did not overhear much of this talk which took place at the *table d'hôte*, where she sat by Mr. Wardlaw on the side remote from the other two ladies, but she had a general impression that Mrs. Wardlaw and her guest were not 'getting on' very well together. After dinner Miss Milburn was particularly gracious to Nelly, either with a view of removing any bad impression she might have made, or to show that she had really no sort of prejudice against that young person, if only she showed no signs of a wicked ambition: but it could not be said to be a successful evening.

The next day, Mr. Milburn being still in town, his sister was again invited to join the little Wardlaw circle, but declined upon the plea of indisposition—which in one sense at least was doubtless a genuine one. It was not likely that she could have taken to Mrs. Wardlaw kindly, who, though a most good-natured and long-suffering woman, and hardly to be moved to anger on her own account—as indeed she had proved in her relations with poor Mrs.

Conway—had resented so decidedly the hints that Miss Milburn had thrown out for Nelly's guidance.

On the fourth day 'dear Herbert' returned, and the intercourse between the two families was renewed. They met out-of-doors, and as they sauntered together upon the sands the young man attached himself to Nelly's side, which gave her some annoyance, but at the same time afforded her an opportunity of thanking him for his present. 'Of course I value it very highly,' she said, 'but for that very reason I feel that I ought not to rob you of it.'

'Nay,' said he gently, 'it is a question of a little loss on the one side, and of a great gain on the other: even a political economist would decide in your favour. I am very glad to have been able to give you the sketch. By the by,' added he, in a lighter tone, 'I have seen Mrs. Wardlaw's favourite, Mr. Pennicuick, in London.'

'Indeed!' answered Nelly quietly: but her heart was beating painfully while she spoke. She never doubted that by 'Mrs. Wardlaw's favourite' Mr. Milburn had meant Raymond; she had thought of him many times since he had turned so sadly from her and hurried away with drooping head over the sands, and wondered how matters were with him.

'I thought I ought to call, you know,' continued Milburn, 'especially as I had heard that he was ill; so I looked him up in the Albany. At first he seemed anything but glad to see me—looked as scared at me as if I had been a ghost—but presently he became almost cordial. I don't think he likes anything that reminds him of his Chinese experiences, which indeed is natural enough, and does him credit. He seems to me by no means so black as he is painted, though perhaps—if I may be allowed to say so—that might be partly owing to the very high terms in which he spoke of a certain Miss Conway.'

'Mr. Pennicuick has been always very civil to *me*,' observed Nelly, smiling; her relief at finding that it was the elder Pennicuick who was the subject of her companion's talk, preventing her taking much notice of his compliment, though it was uttered with some significance.

'Oh, but he was much more than civil, Miss Conway. If he had been your own—that is, your guardian—he could not have said prettier things; our sentiments coincided so perfectly that he asked me to dinner the next day.'

'He must be coming out of his shell indeed,' observed Nelly; 'we understood that he had become quite a recluse.'

'Well, I don't know about that; but he is going into *Parliament*, perhaps upon the "Recluse" interest, for he didn't seem to

have any particular views on Politics. Now, I should have thought a man of that kind would have been an out-and-out, no-compromise, church-and-king old Tory.'

'By which I suppose I may gather,' answered Nelly, 'silly, 'that the politics of Mr. Herbert Milburn are common-sense, progressive, broad, and Liberal.'

'Well, they are something like that, I believe,' answered Milburn, laughing. 'I forgot that your poor father's views were True Blue, and you have no doubt inherited his opinions. However, I am very amenable to what the electioneering people call "influence," and if you will undertake to show me the error of my ways, I don't doubt you will make a convert.'

'I should not like to hold my opinions—whatever they are—quite so loosely as you seem to do, Mr. Milburn,' answered Nelly gravely.

'Oh, excuse me,' answered the young man earnestly; 'I only meant that I had not given much attention to Politics, and took no decided line; and under these circumstances, you know, when a person for whom one has a great respect comes to talk to one, of course he—that is, that person—exercises a considerable effect. But in the case of Mr. Pennicuck, it did seem strange to me that he should seriously contemplate going into Parliament, without even caring on which side he sits.'

'Did he really say that?' inquired Nelly.

'Well, yes, he did. Of course we should not take the words of a man of the world, such as Mr. Pennicuck, quite literally: but it made me laugh to hear him talk. "I want an object in life," he said; "and though to sit for a borough is rather an expensive object, it is cheaper than some others, such as horse-racing, for example, and it also suits me better. As for Whig and Tory, the difference between them is merely that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee."'

'I don't think you should have told me this, Mr. Milburn, if you wanted me to plume myself on the good opinion of me this gentleman was good enough to express.'

'Well, perhaps not: but then you are not likely to "plume yourself," as you term it, upon any such thing. I should think you were a sort of person who would always do what was right without much regard for the opinion of the Mr. Pennicucks. And, by the by, that reminds me that I saw Mr. Pennicuck's son at his father's table; you are acquainted with him, of course?'

'We know him very well,' answered Nelly quietly, for she was quite prepared this time for any allusion to Raymond. 'He is a great favourite—a real one—of Mrs. Wardlaw's.'

‘Do I understand you to imply, and not of yours?’ inquired the other lightly.

‘Certainly not. I have a great regard for him: we were brought up together almost like brother and sister.’

‘Indeed! I should never have guessed that, since he did not speak of you. To be sure he had doubtless heard all about you that I could tell from his father. And besides he was very reticent; hardly spoke a word.’

‘He was well, I hope?’ said Nelly, conscious of her rising colour, and unable, as it seemed to her, to speak with the indifference she intended.

‘Oh yes, he seemed well enough; but if it is not his nature to be silent, he must have been out of spirits. It struck me that the father and son did not hit it off together quite comfortably.’

‘Raymond is not a man to quarrel with his father,’ said Nelly gravely. She resented her companion’s light way of talking of him and of that sorrow which she understood so well. ‘You talked just now of duty; he is the most dutiful man I know.’

‘No doubt he is a good fellow,’ said Milburn hastily; ‘and indeed, since you say so, it must be so. I have not a word to say against him. I did not mean that he and his father quarrelled, only it seemed to me that there had been some recent misunderstanding between them—in fact what, in ignorance of his being such a good young man, I might have profanely called “a row,” and that the son had had to give in, but as it were under protest. It was perhaps about money matters, and in that case the old fellow was the one in fault, no doubt; for we all know he is a screw. That reminds me of something that I wished to tell you. Mr. Pennicuick, as I have said, was not a screw in connection with one matter, indeed as respects all that occurred at Dhulang. I dare say you wondered why I would not let you have that portfolio at the time when you were so good as to call on us, and that I insisted on sending it later to your room. The reason was, that it contained two sketches which, if you had come upon them unexpectedly, would have caused you pain.’

‘That was very kind and thoughtful of you,’ said Nelly gratefully.

‘Nay, it would have been very thoughtless had I not taken the precaution. The fact is that, while at Dhulang, though my visit was very short, I drew a sketch of the Mandarin’s house from which your poor father was committed to the prison. But I am afraid—for she had turned pale—‘I am doing the very thing I would have avoided—giving you the heartache.’

‘No; it was just for the minute. I should like to see the sketch.’

‘You shall not only see it, but possess it. It is not worth your thanks, for since it is my own handiwork, it is not—like the other—of any value.’

‘I shall value it nevertheless,’ answered Nelly simply, ‘upon that very account. I should think of the kindness of the donor, whenever I look at it.’

‘Your words make me very happy,’ answered the young man earnestly. ‘The other sketch will speak for itself. It is—’

‘O Herbert dear, do pray come and tell us about this starfish,’ broke in Miss Milburn; ‘it is quite different from the common ones, and Mrs. Wardlaw is dying to know about it.’

If Mrs. Wardlaw’s decease had depended solely upon her curiosity remaining unsatisfied upon any point of science whatever, whether ichthyological or otherwise, it is probable she would have lived for many hundreds of years; but as a pretext to cut short the conversation between the two young people, Miss Milburn’s speech fulfilled its intention. They had no further chance for private talk that day, and Milburn secretly congratulated himself that he had not wasted his time while the opportunity lasted. His sister’s suspicions, though she would have probably entertained them had Nelly been infinitely less attractive, were in her case well-founded; ‘dear Herbert’ was really smitten by ‘that Miss Conway,’ and much more seriously than his self-constituted guardian and protectress imagined. He had left her with very great reluctance for his two days’ business in town, and as it happened she had been there the topic of Mr. Pennicwick’s talk. Of course Milburn did not need any corroboration of the view he had taken of her character, but somehow the eulogies he had heard from his host’s lips had increased his own admiration of their object. He had no respect for Ralph Pennicwick’s opinions, as we have seen; but still, when he found so acute and experienced a man of the world speaking in such high terms, not only of a girl’s grace and beauty, but of her talents and good sense, it had not been without its effect upon him. He could not know that every word the other said had been spoken with a purpose, namely, to urge Milburn on to offer himself as her lover, and thereby, as he trusted, to extinguish the dying embers of Raymond’s hopes at once and for ever.

As to Nelly, she was quite unconscious of Mr. Milburn’s feelings towards her, notwithstanding his sister’s warnings. She liked him exceedingly, but her liking was due to his relations with her father, and to the evident regard he had entertained for her.

quite as much as to his own attractions. If he had had those alone to recommend him, he would have found her—doubly oppressed as she was by her recent loss, and by her renunciation of Raymond—very difficult of approach and anything but demonstrative. Even as it was, his presence, though agreeable to her, rather increased her melancholy than otherwise, by perpetually reminding her of her father.

The chief interest attaching to the young man in her eyes was that he had gone to Dhulang and been one of the three Englishmen who had seen their dead comrade laid in his grave. The promised sketches were brought to her that afternoon, while she happened to be alone, and she had carried them up to her own room without even mentioning their arrival to her hostess.

Her curiosity respecting them was overpowered by a deeper and more solemn feeling, and she did not open the little packet till she retired for the night. The evening had been very still, and nothing was then heard but the gentle kiss of the wave, or its sigh as it withdrew from the yielding sand; the sky was black and starless, and the quiet and the darkness renewed that sense of solitariness from which she had of late been slowly emerging. She felt again how lonely her life was doomed to be, and her thoughts did not need the association which Mr. Milburn's gift must needs possess to turn them to those who had departed and left her thus alone. Did her father see her now, she wondered, and was he conscious how great a void his death had made for her, and how she yearned to join him in the land of shades? She sat down with a certain sense of expectation, but also with one of weariness and woe that dulled its edge, and opened the packet. The first sketch depicted the house of Twang-hi, the Mandarin, taken from the garden where we saw poor Conway and his companion—the former so unconscious of coming trouble—on the morning after their visit to the Temple. It was a bright and cheerful scene, with the light of summer shining upon the velvet lawn and the gilded pinnacles of the Joss-house, with its flowing lines of roof and tiny balconies. It was difficult to imagine that those gay and glittering gates could have been the portals of death—and such a death! If Nelly imagined that this very contrast gave her greater pain, she found out her mistake when her eyes rested on the second sketch, which, as Milburn had said, spoke for itself. It had been apparently taken by moonlight, and represented an abrupt hill thickly covered with pine-trees. The whole scene was black and gloomy to an extreme degree, save the Lamp of Night in the heavens and one white spot on some level ground at the foot of the hill—which was a tombstone.

Nelly understood at once that she was looking on her father's grave.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AN OBJECT IN LIFE.

WHETHER Ralph Pennicuick did or did not exaggerate his own cynicism respecting political life in his talk with Milburn, he was quite in earnest about going into Parliament. The 'object in life' of which he spoke had really become necessary to him, though hitherto he had made it his boast that he was able to get on without any such thing. He had been asked more than once how it was that he contrived to pass his aimless existence with such apparent ease and self-satisfaction, and his answer had always been 'Because I understand myself.' He had studied his own wants (or rather wishes), his tastes, his characteristics, just as a man of science studies the Fauna or the Flora of some particular clime, and had thus acquired a perfect knowledge of himself: if this was not the 'know thyself' of the philosopher, it was a good practical guide, and had at least made him certain of what he liked, which is a great step in the direction which he considered to be the right one.

He flattered himself, because he was vicious without being actually depraved, that he had in his pleasures hit the golden mean: he did not trouble himself with study, but he read not only those French novels, more numerous than select, which form the chief literary pabulum of men of his stamp (as well as of many others who ought to know better), but also such books as dealt with the thoughtful questions of the time; if these did not do him the benefit their authors (if we are to believe their prefaces) intended, they kept him abreast, and—assisted by his natural cleverness—even ahead, of most minds with which he was brought into contact. It was pleasant to him to hear it said that 'that fellow Pennicuick, idle as he was, knew as much as any of your reading men,' and there was also some solid advantage to be got out of it. When one goes to Rome, for example, nine-tenths of the enjoyment of the visit is lost without a little scholarship, and to lose enjoyment annoyed Pennicuick almost as much as to have lost a day pained the tender conscience of Titus. He was a good sportsman, without ever becoming the slave of horse, or dog, or gun, and, in a word, had taken just so much of interest in most things as made his time pass agreeably wherever he was.

But now things had altered with him altogether; small matters could no longer win his mind from what he termed his 'morbid

thoughts,' but what was in truth remorse and self-reproach. He felt for the first time the want not so much of an object in life as (very literally) a diversion, and he was not the man to long deny himself his desire. Circumstances indeed had made it absolutely necessary that he should obtain it quickly as a relief from worries of all sorts. Not only was there the central trouble, which he had fondly hoped Nelly's acceptance or rejection of the proffered annuity would set at rest, haunting him day and night with grim persistence, but his relations with Raymond were most annoying. He could certainly not be said to be a devoted father; it had perhaps been part of his admirable scheme of life not to bestow his affections anywhere for fear he should be made to suffer through them; but he had doubtless some vulgar natural liking for his only son, and in his present nervous and depressed condition he keenly felt (though he would have scorned to acknowledge it) the need of human sympathy. It was therefore highly disagreeable to him that none was forthcoming. Raymond was dutiful still, solicitous for his comfort, and always at his beck and call, but his manner plainly showed that he had been hardly used and could not forget it. Directly he had become acquainted with the fact that he had an independence of his own, he had, as we have seen, gone at once to Nelly, and asked her to become his wife; but in accordance with his promise to Mr. Tatham he had said nothing of his having acquired this knowledge to his father, nor of course of the action that he had taken on becoming possessed of it. The melancholy that had seized him since his rejection by Nellie was therefore set down by Ralph Pennicuck as caused by his own opposition to the match, which indeed in the main it was; and his fear was that, when his son should come into his mother's money, he would do the very thing which in fact he had done, only with the opposite result; that is to say, that Nelly, trusting to his own eventual forgiveness, or perhaps rendered careless of it by her passion, might accept his son's love and marry him out of hand. He had therefore used every argument to Herbert Milburn to induce him to prevent this catastrophe by marrying the girl himself. As time went on, and Raymond in due course came into his slender inheritance, it was no small relief to his father that he did not take the course thus apprehended; and to reward him for it—though he was careful not to say so—he informed him that for the future his allowance would be continued to him notwithstanding that he had now an equal income of his own. 'You may have wondered, my lad, why I have never told you of the existence of the little independence that has become your own; the reason was, not that I desired to keep you in leading-strings, but that I wished

you to practise economy and self-restraint, since an exaggerated view of what would probably be yours some day—and certainly will be if you continue to please me—might lead you into habits of extravagance. But now that you have shown you are a sensible fellow, and know the value of money, I have great pleasure in making you easy in your circumstances: you will henceforward have six hundred a year to spend instead of three hundred.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Raymond (never did the expression of gratitude have less of cordiality in it). 'I think, however, it is but right that you should know all, before bestowing your generosity upon what you may consider an unworthy object.'

'Know all?' exclaimed the other, once more alarmed lest his son should have set him at nought by a secret marriage; 'you have done nothing, I hope, that you are ashamed of.'

'No, sir: though I would have done something, if I could, of which you would not have approved.'

Raymond had never felt so galled, antagonistic, and (albeit he had nothing now to fear) so defiant. His father's words had sounded very bitter to him. The reason he had given for his silence about his mother's money was, he felt, a false one; he had been kept in ignorance of it for the very cause which the other had disclaimed, namely, that he might be kept in leading-strings. The allusion to his father's fortune was also false; instead of taking an exaggerated view of it, Ralph Pennicuick must have known that his son had believed it to be much less than it really was. The threat implied in the phrase 'if you continue to please me' was offensive to the young man; and, above all, the sense that his father's objection to his marriage had proved an insurmountable bar to Nelly's acceptance of him, made him very grave and grim.

Ralph Pennicuick's mind leaped at once to the truth, so far as the girl was concerned.

'If nothing has been done amiss, Raymond,' said he quietly, 'you may trust to my forgiveness of the intention, since I conclude that it no longer exists.'

'But it does exist, sir, and it always will exist,' answered the young man quickly. 'The first use I made of the discovery of my independence was to ask Miss Conway to become my wife.'

'I had an idea that when we last talked upon this subject, Raymond, that course of action was barred.'

'No, sir: it was agreed that I should not damage the young lady's prospects, as regarded your proffered aid, by urging my suit: but since she refused your bounty, she could be no longer harmed by acting counter to your wishes. I proposed therefore to marry

her, and would have done so; I would marry her to-morrow if she would have me.'

'You are very frank, I must say. Well, the young lady, it seems, rejected you.'

'Miss Conway, I am sorry to say, refused to be my wife, upon the ground that it would cause a breach between yourself and me, and prejudice my future prospects.'

'She took a very correct view of what would have happened, my good lad,' said Ralph Pennicuick coolly, 'and exhibited an amount of common sense that is rare indeed in women.'

'I beg, sir, that you will not make light of what is the gravest calamity of my life,' said Raymond warmly. 'I cannot—nay, I will not—bear it.'

'Oh, I see,' observed the other in his most cynical tones. 'You are seeking a quarrel. You wish me to say, "Go to the devil," and then you would go to this excellent and high-principled young woman and say, "My wicked father has cast me off: the breach between us is made; my future prospects are ruined, and therefore we might just as well be man and wife." The plan does infinite credit to your sagacity, but I am not quite certain that, with respect to morals and filial feeling, it is quite so worthy of praise.'

'So help me Heaven, sir, such an idea never entered into my mind!' exclaimed Raymond. 'I should have thought it shameful to entertain it. My motive was merely to avoid partaking of your bounty under false pretences. I disobeyed you in my heart, and I do so still, and I think it right that you should know it.'

'Well, well, we cannot always control our wishes, my lad,' returned the other quietly, 'even when they are in opposition to our best interests and to those who have the right to choose for us. I freely forgive your deviation from the path of filial duty, and I hope—' he hesitated; it would have seemed impossible to Ralph Pennicuick, a few months ago, that he should have made such an appeal to any man, much less to his own son, but he did make it—'I hope you will forgive *me* for being what now doubtless seems to you an obstacle to your happiness, but in reality——'

'I forgive you, sir, so far as it is possible,' put in Raymond hastily; 'I will try to think you are acting for the best; but pray let us drop the subject.'

The fruits of victory of course remained with the elder Pennicuick, but he by no means felt master of the field. His son, it was plain, was no longer in his power, since a threat of disinheritanee would be welcome to him; and indeed he owed his obedience, not, it seemed, to filial respect, but to the view which Nelly had happened to take upon the matter. It may be thought, perhaps,

that another bitter reflection would have occurred to him, namely, that, should he die, the young people would speedily console themselves for his departure; but the fact was that, notwithstanding he knew that his health was failing, and that rapidly, he shut Death out from view—for a particular reason. It was not terrible to him upon theological grounds; for before we fear God, we must at least believe in His existence; but he shrank from the contemplation of it, because it was just possible that, on the other side of the grave, he might be brought face to face with Arthur Conway. It may be asked, if this was the case, why did he not make haste to reconcile himself with him as far as possible, by reparation and atonement? The same question may be put concerning most men. Their time is short: eternity is long. They must surely be mad to procrastinate. And yet, as a general rule, they do not hurry themselves to make amends. 'There are so many things to be considered.'

It was necessary for Ralph Pennicuck to live most resolutely in the Present, forgetting the Past and ignoring the Future, and, since he was always careful not to live for others, to get some *thing* to live for. And this thing had resolved itself into a seat in Parliament. It is not rare in England for a man in middle life, who has all things comfortable about him, and no inward call whatever towards politics, to entertain this ambition; to spend money without stint for the privilege of sitting in the great chamber of the nation until the small hours, to hear speeches made that have no sort of interest for him: but in Ralph Pennicuck's case his avowed intention to take this course did arouse no little surprise. For in the days when it was said of him that he could do anything he liked, and when it had not as yet been discovered that he liked to do nothing, a political career had been prophesied for him; nay, had been even offered to him, and declined. And now that he was getting on in years, it seemed strange enough that he should thus reconsider that matter. He had an answer, we may be sure, for all who expressed their surprise at it: for he was bright and keen as ever, out-of-doors; as much respected (when present) in the club smoking-room; and as much a leading figure in certain social circles of consideration, as of yore. He was not always cowering over his autumn fire in his rooms at the Albany, alone save for the spectres of the Dead, and the company of a certain familiar spirit, who was growing every day more familiar than welcome to him.

He went about his electioneering, too, in a practical common-sense way; not in asking vague questions here and there, or 'putting himself into communication' with those political committees about which we hear so much, and of the work of which

we see so little, for a very sufficient reason—namely, that they do none. On the contrary, he applied in person for the thing he wanted to Mr. Gustavus Pierrepont.

Mr. Pierrepont was not a 'creature' of any party, nor even a wire-puller, except so far as his own private machinery was concerned, in connection with the body politic; but he had turned his attention to electioneering just as other men turn theirs to science or philosophy; only the result of *his* studies was that he knew much more about the matter in question, for certain, than they did; and moreover he made his living by it. He took a very material, almost a mechanical, view of his calling. In his snug apartment in Gray's Inn he had a map of England laid out—though it was always kept rolled up—upon quite a peculiar system. It was divided into electoral districts coloured like a geological chart, only the strata signified political opinions: they were denoted by the most various shades of blue and yellow, from indigo to orange, while here and there (in a good many places) were very cheerful spots of scarlet, which meant, I am sorry to say, 'these seats generally go to the highest bidder.'

There was a certain borough in the Midland Counties, called Slowcomb, which wore a very roseate hue indeed on this tell-tale map, and it was about Slowcomb that Mr. Ralph Pennicuick called one morning in Gray's Inn—after a little previous correspondence—to have some professional talk with Mr. Pierrepont. The subject divided itself, like a sermon, into several heads, only (which is not the case with sermons, which generally keep their 'gallop for the avenue') the most important was the first brought under notice. This was of course 'the figure.'

Mr. Pierrepont was of opinion that the privilege of representing Slowcomb—for which there were two members—could be acquired for between two and three thousand pounds; he would venture to say three at the outside.

'It is a large sum to throw away upon a caprice,' observed Mr. Pennicuick (as though he had been in the habit of investing his money in works of public utility for the benefit of the nation), 'and I conclude that my return will at least be realised if I do so. If success could be guaranteed, I don't think I should grudge even the three thousand.'

Mr. Pierrepont gave a deprecatory smile.

'Well, of course, a guarantee is out of the question; but I will pledge my professional reputation that—if you will be guided by my advice—in five weeks hence you will be one of the members for Slowcomb, though this is the last time I shall be able to say as much.'

'You think that at the next general election we shall have the Ballot?'

'There is no doubt of it; and though, in my opinion, it will not very much alter matters, nothing can then be predicated for certain. At present the thing lies in a nutshell. Sir James Tremaine and Warren only just scraped in last time by forty votes, and the Liberals had a very shaky candidate. In your case no one will have a word to say.'

'Well, I don't know that there is much against me,' said Pennicuick.

'On the contrary, everything is in your favour; now, Tremaine and Warren, though united in face of the common danger—that is, yourself—will not pull very well together. The borough has been in Sir James's family for four generations. He represents the principle of feudality. Warren, on the other hand, is a *novus homo*, and only a Conservative on that account; it being the quickest method to gain admission among the Upper Ten. Warren's men—he has the ironworks, you know, where the mechanics are Radicals to a man—only vote for him from *esprit de corps*.'

'And because, being mechanics,' observed Mr. Pennicuick drily, 'they appreciate the principle of the lever.'

'Not at all. You are quite mistaken, my dear sir. If they did not like their chieftain—who has a pleasant fluent way with him enough, and is a good paymaster—they would throw him over. They would much rather vote with him on your side against Tremaine, but they will stand by their man.'

'Then he will be as safe as Tremaine himself?'

'More so; it is Sir James who will have to go.'

'Impossible! why, he owns half the place.'

'Just so. This is how it is. Sir James is a thorough party man. His people will have orders to split their votes: he will promise, moreover, that there shall be no plumping. I shall take care that early on the polling day you will be ahead of them both. Then Warren (for I know him) will get frightened, and will privately let his men know that they are to plump for him. They will certainly do so since they hate Sir James, and that great feudal chief will be left out in the cold.'

'But that will be very discreditable in Warren?'

Mr. Pierrepont shrugged his shoulders.

'Everybody is not a gentleman, like yourself, Mr. Pennicuick. You of course would scorn to break a promise—even though it were only implied. It would make no matter to you whether it was expressed in writing, witnessed, signed and sealed, or merely an understanding between friends: it would have the same force.'

‘I suppose so; yes,’ said Pennicuick. He endeavoured to speak with indifference, but he felt his cheeks burn.

‘Well, of course; but this Warren will act like a cur.’

A cur! That was the term this parliamentary agent—no very particular person, and one used to deal with very ‘shaky’ characters—applied to one who broke his promises even about election matters and to a mere political acquaintance. What would he call a man (wondered Pennicuick) who had pledged his word to a dying man—a man, too, who had died for him, and who was his dearest friend—and deliberately ignored it!

‘Well, Mr. Pierrepoint, I shall go in for Slowcomb.’

‘Very good.’ Mr. Pierrepoint opened a ledger, and with some demonstrativeness put his pen through a couple of names. ‘You will have a fair field, and I believe a good deal of favour.’

‘I am not the first applicant for the place, it seems?’

‘No, the third. The other two were shilly-shallying. They will both complain that I have come to terms with you, but secretly will both be glad. Bunkum of that sort is very common. The writs for the boroughs will be out at the end of the month, so we have not too much time before us. You would like to be spared as much trouble as possible, I conclude?’

‘Not at all. I should like to go down at once, and begin my canvass.’

‘Very good. If you will call to-morrow at this hour, I will furnish you with all preliminary information.’

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

FEBRUARY 1878.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON CANVASS.

ON the third day after that interview with Mr. Pierrepont, Ralph Pennicuck was at Slowcomb, 'putting up,' as it was then called (perhaps because guests had a good deal to put up with), at the 'Swan with Two Necks' at Slowcomb. It was a fine country inn of the old style, with huge rooms smelling very fusty though they were full of draughts; great four-poster beds with canopies an inch thick in dust; candlesticks of massive silver; and a great reputation for old port. It was very lofty, but it had no 'lift'; there was not a spring mattress in the house; there was no smoking room, no bath room, no reading room. For any modern comfort that it could supply, it might have been furnished a century ago. But it had always been the head-quarters of the 'yellows,' and the yellow candidate patronised it accordingly.

If that most respectable widow woman, the landlady, could have looked into the heart of this guest she delighted to honour, when on the second day after his arrival she expressed her hopes—according to immemorial usage—that he found the 'Swan with Two Necks' to his liking, it is probable she would have experienced a severe shock. He had been all the world over (though, it is true, always with an eye to his personal comfort), and he thought this highly respectable inn at Slowcomb 'the most infernal hole in which he had ever set foot.'

It was certainly an irritating place of abode for anybody, on account of the solemn air of pretence and dignity which pervaded it. There was a man in the great hall in a kind of military uniform, who did nothing but open and shut the door, and sleep in a sort of sedan chair without handles. If the head waiter had worn an

apron (which was not to be thought of), you would have concluded him to have been a bishop at least, and his method of performing his duties carried out that idea. Every meal was a solemn rite, and the arrangement of the napkins was as vital a question with him as 'vestments' to a High Church ecclesiastic. This magnificent personage waited on Mr. Pennicuick with his own hands, in the first-floor apartment (fifty feet long by thirty broad) that had been assigned to him; and in course of time his use was discovered; he had been created (it was evident) for the purpose of introducing deputations.

Mr. Hatton cultivated him, with the sinister object of 'drawing him out' and reproducing him for the benefit of society in town. The female domestics, being carefully selected for their great respectability and mature years, did not distract his attention from this study.

I have said that the 'Swan with Two Necks' would have been distasteful to anyone not a mummy or a fossil, but to Ralph Pennicuick it was something worse. He slept—or rather he retired to rest—in an apartment admirably adapted for lying-in-state, but little suited to a living occupant. There were two steps at the side of the bed by which access could be gained to it; but once in it you were in a sea of feathers, which overwhelmed you with its billows; the pillow was feathery too, and you were smothered there as certainly as elsewhere. It was not you that 'tossed,' but the bed itself. Now and then, like the porpoise, you came to the top for air; you sat up, that is, and breathed a breath or two; but even then you sank down, down, and were presently submerged sitting. To complain of this bed, with which so many candidates had expressed themselves satisfied, would be, Pennicuick felt, to endanger the prospects of the Liberal cause in Slowcomb.

An adventure happened to him, however, the very first night, of a nature so terrible, that he almost made up his mind to leave the place, and let Sir James and Mr. Warren misrepresent it for another Parliament. He had fallen after some hours into a perturbed sleep, from which he was awakened by the splash of water; it mingled with his dream, as such things will, and what it seemed at first to be was the noise the cormorants made which he had seen fishing in the river when with his friend in China. His dreams were often laid in those scenes, and this had been a comparatively quiet one; not filled with prisons, and tortures, and one ghastly spectacle—a mangled body tied to an upright stake—which haunted him with terrible persistence. Still it had been graphic and lifelike enough to hold him for some waking moments in its spell. He leaped from the bed, and applied one of the quaint

wax candles on his dressing table to the night-light which he always kept burning. The dropping of water was still heard: but he now understood that it was only that intermittent splash and choking which often takes place at night in the pipes of such establishments as the 'Swan.' The aspect of the room was a little more gloomy than it had been, but he recognised it well enough; the two black feathers at the corners of the bed-head (for there were feathers *there* too) looked more like funeral plumes than ever, and he was turning from them with a half sneer, half shudder (common enough with him now when he was alone), to put out the light, when something shining on the carpet attracted his attention. He stooped down and picked it up; then uttered a cry of fear so loud and wild that it must have rung through any house of modern construction. Unfortunately, however (as he thought at the time), the state rooms of this ancient inn were provided with inner doors of baize, through which no sound could easily penetrate, and his voice was unheard. He sank into a chair in a perspiration of fear, and not until some minutes later did he muster courage sufficient to examine the thing which had filled him with such terror.

What he thought it was, was the Shay-le of Buddha that he had stolen from the temple, and which had been the cause of the catastrophe that had slain his friend and made a scoundrel of himself. What it really was, was a drop that had fallen from the great chandelier that hung from the centre of the room, and on which the light played as it lay on the carpet as though it had been the Kohinoor. Though Pennicuck thus convinced himself as to what it was, the effect of his mistake was by no means transient. It shook his nerves, and, what was worse, turned his thoughts and dreams more than ever into that channel from which he was always striving to free them. In vain he said to himself that it was an infernal shame (he did not say upon whose part, but made it somehow a vague grievance against the government of the universe) that he should be troubled in this way about a transgression for which he had done his best to make atonement. It was no fault of his that Conway's daughter had refused his bounty; and as to the amount of it, if he had offered her 20,000*l.*—*the* 20,000*l.*—she would probably have refused it just the same. It was not as if he had not tried to put himself right with her. In opposing her marriage with Raymond he had only exercised a privilege enjoyed by every father. Young Milburn was a better match for her every way, and he had said all he could to bring it about: had asked the fellow to dinner (though he hated the sight of him), and gone out of his way to promote it. As to giving up the lump sum, now, it could not be

done. No possible excuse could be made for it, supposing even he contemplated such an act of folly. The consideration that 'nobody knew about it,' or even that there was no real claim upon him—only a matter of morbid sentiment—no longer weighed with him; he had, as it were, long sailed by all those obstacles, which had once looked so formidable; and yet he was not in smooth water. It really was 'deuced hard.' His health, of course, was not what it had been, or he would have known how to deal with these chimæras. It was possible, notwithstanding, that they would have proved too many for Mr. Pennicuick, had he been doomed to spend much more time in the solemn solitudes of the 'Swan;' but he was so fortunate as to make so favourable an impression upon a Mr. Major, the mayor of Slowcomb and the leading Liberal of the place, that he invited him to remove from the 'Swan with Two Necks' to his own home.

This was a villa residence, just outside the town, which in its newness and primness offered the strongest contrast to his late quarters, and was therefore all the more welcome to him. There were huge rooms—but full of light, without and within—that offered the same facilities for the reception of his hoped-for constituents which those of the inn had done, and Mr. Major threw them open for that purpose with generous patriotism. 'Don't you deny yourself to anybody' was the advice he gave to his guest, and Pennicuick followed it not unwillingly. It was a relief to him to be always doing something, or receiving somebody, though he would have smiled his old sardonic smile, if you had said that his mind was occupied. Whatever he did was to distract his mind and dissipate his more importunate thoughts. It was with this object that he made his canvass on foot, or horseback, or even sometimes in a carriage with good-natured Mrs. Major beside him, in colours that did more credit to her principles than to her complexion.

He had also to make innumerable speeches. They were rather good ones of their kind—certainly above the average of similar displays of eloquence that were to be heard at that time throughout the country—but it was a perpetual matter of surprise to him that anybody could be got to listen to them without being paid for it. He had always had a high idea of the stupidity of his fellow-creatures: he had thought it 'stupendous,' and incalculable; but he now felt that the adjectives he had applied to it fell short of the subject. Of course it was very sad that people should be thronging to hear a gentleman speak with no particular eloquence upon themes that were by that time as sucked oranges; but Mr. Pennicuick did not reflect that, though no person was

paid (directly) for hearing him, there was at least no charge made upon his side, and that the love of gratuitous entertainment—under which head are even comprised sermons and orreries—is one of the strongest passions of uncultivated man and woman. Moreover, there was just that *souppçon* of ‘improvement’ about these oratorical flights of his, which reconciled people, who might otherwise have had scruples about throwing away their time, to coming to hear him. But to the orator himself these harangues were (not vanity, for, to do him justice, he thought anything but highly of them, but) vexation of spirit. He had a positive feeling of humiliation in saying the same thing over and over again, in district *A*, district *B*, and district *C*, and especially, as sometimes happened, to the same people. His excellent host, for example, gave him his countenance everywhere, and never dreamt how uncomfortable he made his guest, by sitting apparently with rapt attention (sucking the knob of his umbrella) while his candidate aired his well-worn platitudes, or ascended the oft-trodden path of declamation! He greatly over-estimated Mr. Major’s sufferings, which were set down as ‘all in the day’s work,’ for that gentleman’s whole heart was in the election for Slowcomb, the result of which he honestly believed would be to overturn the principle of Feudalism, and to make Tyrants tremble.

Mr. Pennicuck saw nothing of this ‘vision splendid,’ but only the farmers or small tradespeople he happened to be addressing, and to whom he could not conceive that he was giving pleasure: but at the same time the whole thing was so new to him that it took him out of himself, and effected for the time the very object he had in view. It was a much greater change than anything he had experienced in going abroad: for after all that is but a superficial change. New scenery, costumes, and language do not go so far down as a new range of human character; he had made in foreign parts about the same sort of acquaintances that he met at home, and had never probably so much as spoken to a greengrocer (for instance) in all his life. Mr. Major himself was a most interesting study—though his interest in him, it is true, was grievously marred by his own cynicism. It seemed very extraordinary to him that a man who had been an ironmonger—Major’s ‘registered’ coalscuttle was a household word in many domestic circles—and made a fortune by it, should identify himself with any kind of political movement. What could it matter to him how the world was governed (so long as cutlery was not superseded), or who was in, or who was out? But this mattered to Mr. Major (or at least he thought so) very much.

Mr. Pierrepont had the highest opinion of him, and wrote to

Pennicwick, 'You could not have done a wiser thing than stay at "the Andirons"'—which was the popular name for the villa—'only don't forget to keep on your rooms at the "Swan" all the same.'

After each day's proceedings Mr. Major made a most elaborate calculation of the results, and as the date of the election drew near became more and more confident.

'I'll lay a fippun' note, Mr. Pennicwick, as we'll bring you in at the head of the poll.'

Pennicwick would have taken the bet, which was clearly a good 'hedge,' but that he was afraid it would look like a want of confidence. As a matter of fact, he himself had but little hope or fear, and of course no actual knowledge of the matter whatever. He had already begun to think that Parliamentary life would bore him a good deal, and interest him scarcely at all; and, unlike all other candidates that ever were, he felt that he should be sorry when all the turmoil of the contest should be over. Still, of course, he wished to win: the notion of throwing away 2,000*l.* was displeasing to him, and the idea, which his host expressed, of 'at all events placing the great Liberal party of his country under a great obligation' would not have gone very far with him in the way of consolation.

He prided himself on never having yet been baulked in anything on which he had set his mind, and he had a reputation to keep up at the clubs to that effect. He had met his two opponents in the course of his canvass, and of course with courtesy; his behaviour towards them throughout had indeed been rather more civil than some of his supporters approved.

'If there was anything against you, as there was against Gaythorne' (the previous Liberal candidate), 'it would be different,' they had naively said; 'but you have nothing to fear from them; and you should hold your own as tight as wax.' Certainly no canvass at Slowcombe had ever been conducted with so few personalities. There were yellow posters, of course, calling upon all slaves to put their necks under Sir James's chariot wheels—and even a very spirited likeness of him in the character of the Genius of Feudalism, driving a couple of steeds, with Oppression and Exaction written upon their foreheads; and there was a pleasant little cartoon of Mr. Warren in the act of blacking boots. But the highest flight of offence to which the blue posters attained as respected Mr. Pennicwick was the inquiry, 'Who is He?' by which they intended to convey that that gentleman was a total stranger in those parts, and had no business to be there at all.

The hustings had been erected opposite the Town Hall, just on

the right-hand side of it; a space cleared for some building operations had been temporarily taken by the Blues for the erection of a temporary hoarding and the display thereon of banners, mottoes, and the interrogation, 'Ralph Pennicuick, who is He?' in very startling characters indeed. On the day when the candidates were proposed, some of these queries were removed, and the gigantic inquiry 'What has he Done?' was substituted for them, with a large space beneath either signifying that he had done nothing, or to be filled up by the imagination of the Conservative reader with 'atrocities.' This amused Mr. Major very much. 'It is very seldom in these days, my dear sir, that any candidate comes before a constituency with such clean hands as yours. Gaythorne, between ourselves, was a very queer fish indeed: I worked for him, of course; but it was against the grain, and with feelings very different from those I experience in your case. There was a story, and I believe it had some truth in it, that he had robbed a ward of his—quite a girl—of thousands of pounds, and thereby compelled her to go out as a governess.'

'I should have thought the law would have taken cognizance of a fraud of that kind,' observed Pennicuick carelessly.

'Well, he was on the safe side of the law; the girl's father, it seems, had an implicit trust in him, and Gaythorne betrayed it. He was very "yellow" (or rather he pretended to be, for he had in reality no principles save that of taking care of number one), and that hid his blackness; else he was a man who ought to have been hung. We have therefore had some lee way to make up, you see, but I think we have done it. To-morrow you will make your last speech as a candidate for Slowcomb; the day after you will be its representative.'

It was certain that one of the two Conservative candidates would be run very hard indeed, and that, if there was 'plumping,' Warren would be 'out of it.' Sir James, however, had given the order that all Blue votes should be split; and if this was carried out to the letter, all honest Blues (for to despond in such cases is to be lukewarm and almost dishonest) were very sanguine about carrying both their men. In those days the Ballot was a question very hotly debated; but if the three candidates for Slowcomb—two of whom were openly opposed to that measure, and the third (though he supported it) was privately as much against it as themselves—could have looked a few years ahead, they would certainly—as candidates—have altered their opinion. Our children's children, accustomed to the present quiet of electioneering proceedings, will be unable to picture to themselves the riot and disorder that attended the 'nomination day,' even in

the dullest of dull country boroughs. Slowcomb was not only dull, but really respectable, except for the ironworking element ('on this occasion only' allied with 'the party of order'), and yet for two days it was given up to licence--and the licensing system. From morn to dewy eve every public-house was full, and all places of business empty.

To the candidates, as they stood on the hustings, was presented a sea of upturned faces, half of which shrieked applause, and half hurled defiance. As to the statements of their political convictions, it was fortunate that they were intrusted in manuscript to the reporters for the Press, or the world would have retained nothing of them beyond disjointed fragments. Of the first sentences nothing at all was heard, and the man who knew his business best, and who in this case was Sir James, moved his lips, gesticulated, and smiled with the utmost sweetness for five minutes, without uttering a syllable; after which there was a lull, and the crowd began to listen.

It is not necessary for us to do the like, and the less so since he only repeated for the most part what his proposer and seconder had said before him. In his place in the House, Sir James had once risen, it was said, to complain of the draught from an open window; but that had been his only Parliamentary utterance. He told the electors of Slowcomb on this occasion that though he hoped his heart was in the right place, he was not much of a speaker. And no exception could have been taken to the truth of that statement by the most censorious.

Mr. Warren, on the contrary, was glib, and possessed that singular power of walking round a subject, without ever going into it, that is peculiar to a certain class of men, and, curiously enough, especially to self-made men. They have, perhaps, expended so much of their practical force in getting money, that they have none left for other uses. He paid some rather fulsome compliments to Tremaine, 'an old and tried representative,' whereat Mr. Major nudged Pennicuick, and whispered, 'You see, they are as thick as thieves.' The yellow candidate nodded adhesion, but in his own mind came to the conclusion that this sycophancy was a good sign, and went rather to corroborate Mr. Pierrepont's view, that if it came to a pinch the ironmaster would throw the baronet over.

When Mr. Warren sat down, Mr. Harwood, a country gentleman in the neighbourhood, proposed Mr. Pennicuick in a neat speech, with a quotation from Shelley at the end of it about the banner of Freedom streaming 'against' the wind, which caused much discussion afterwards in the local journals upon scientific grounds;

and then got up Mr. Pennicuick's seconder, Mr. Major. This gentleman stood in the remarkable position of believing every word he said, and saying it from the bottom of his heart; and if his aspirates had been as unexceptionable as his aspirations, he would have been a very formidable orator indeed. Even as it was, he began to attract so much rapt attention, that the brass band of the Blues were given orders to divert it, which was done forthwith. Art is often compared with Nature, to the former's disadvantage; yet what is the human voice when in competition with a trombone? Mr. Major, however, was permitted to say a few words in conclusion which had a personal reference to his candidate. 'We have been asked,' he said (indeed, I am afraid he said 'ast'), "'Who is He?" and I will answer that question. He is a gentleman of old family and good estate, who, having passed his life in a varied experience of mankind at home and abroad, has turned of late a mind of no ordinary calibre to the consideration of those vital questions——' Here the trombone expressed dissent. 'It has been asked—I see the question on yonder hoarding—"What has he Done?" He——' A roar of laughter shook the crowd. The blank space on the hoarding in question had suddenly become filled up, as if by magic. It was in reality a very well-known pantomime trick, but it was new to Slowcombe eyes, and exceedingly effective. A large board, worked on a pivot, had suddenly been reversed; and underneath the question, 'What has he Done?' now appeared in enormous characters, 'INQUIRE AT DHULANG, CHINA.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

'AN HON. MEMBER.'

THE suggestion that had suddenly appeared upon the Conservative hoarding owed all its effect of course, so far as the great mass of the spectators were concerned, to its unexpectedness. There were probably not half a dozen present who remembered to have heard of Dhulang—though it had been mentioned in the newspapers in connection with Conway's death—and very few who had any definite notion even of China. But to Pennicuick the unexpectedness of this spectacle only contributed to the shock he experienced. How the thing got there at all was the problem that confounded him, and for the moment seemed to turn his blood to water; he felt as weak and flaccid as a starved man, with no capability within him save that of abject terror. He stared at those pregnant words till—absurd as they were to the common eye, and reproducing indeed but a very ordinary form of advertise-

ment—they seemed to be written, like Belshazzar's warning on the wall, in letters of fire. And at that moment his seconder sat down, and he found himself called upon to make his speech. He could about as easily have leaped across the street on to the roof of the Town Hall, which was paved, like every other available space, with expectant faces: he was tongue-tied, dumb. From the direction of his eyes, which were still fixed upon the hated words, the cause of his silence was instinctively guessed at, and a roar of 'Dhulang, Dhulang! tell us what took place at Dhulang' shook the air.

'I will tell you,' answered a sharp stern voice; it was Pennicuick's own, though it was difficult to recognise it as such, and though he himself scarcely knew that he was speaking. The instinct of self-preservation—always powerful within him—had come at last, and all the stronger for its temporary intermission. Those shrill and piercing tones produced an immediate silence. 'I will answer you—you, whoever you are, who have written on that wall that cruel question—and you, my friends, shall judge between us, whether I or the writer has cause to be ashamed. At Dhulang I lost, through a miserable misfortune, and by the most cruel of deaths, the dearest friend that man ever had. I did all that I could, so help me Heaven, to save him, as is well known to many persons then in China whose sympathy I can never sufficiently acknowledge, but I failed. It is a subject so distressing, so ineffably painful to me, that the mere mention of it affects me—as you have just seen. And yet I would rather suffer thus, if it were for all eternity, than change places with that ruffian, who, taking advantage of my known weakness, should have chosen such an opportunity as this, when I need all my powers to express the gratitude I feel towards you for your kind reception of me, to blast them with a reminder such as *that*——' As he spoke with withering scorn, and flung his hand out in the direction of the obnoxious placard, a rush was made upon the hoarding by the furious 'Yellows,' and in a few minutes it was levelled with the ground. 'That's worth at least fifty votes to us,' cried Mr. Major in Pennicuick's ear; 'but don't press it; now stick it into them about the Ballot.'

'I have done with personalities,' continued Pennicuick; 'I do not need any disclaimer from my honourable opponents, with respect to that outrage which you have just treated in the only way that it deserved. Such mean and anonymous slanders can never emanate, I am sure, from gentlemen who have used such hard words about votes by Ballot,' et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. The speech was a successful one even on its merits, but it certainly

owed its triumphant reception to the burst of scorn which had been its herald.

‘My dear Pennicuick, I congratulate you,’ cried Mr. Major, laughing, as they drove off to ‘The Andirons’ together after the show of hands, which had been two to one in favour of his friend. ‘As a piece of acting your treatment of the thing was perfect. You took us all in for the moment: and for my part I thought you were quite floored.’

‘Acting, Mr. Major! I don’t understand you!’

‘Oh pray, my dear sir, don’t mistake me. Of course you felt all you said: but the opportunity—the *patness*—that is what charms me beyond expression. What a tactician you are, too, while all the time you have pretended to know nothing about electioneering! How the deuce did you manage—on the enemy’s ground, too—to get that placard put up?’

Pennicuick smiled and threw himself back in the carriage. If Mr. Major really supposed that he had put that horrid placard up himself, so much the better. It would save him a great deal of torture in the way of examination and investigation. It had been upon the tip of his tongue to answer, ‘I know no more than the Dead about this thing,’ but the thought of ‘the Dead’ had restrained him. What hateful conspiracy had been at work to remind him of what had happened at Dhulang, which was unknown to living man, except a few Chinese? What personal enemy could have set the thing on foot he burnt to know; but he also shrank from all inquiry into that subject. It was much better to let it drop, and Mr. Major’s suggestion offered the readiest way to do so.

But in the mean time he was racked by forebodings; filled with presentiments of evil, to which he could give no tangible shape. He had come down to Slowcomb with no other object than to forget one terrible incident in his past life, and, lo, he had become publicly reminded of it, and that too with the obvious intention of imputing to him some wrongdoing in the matter. Who *could* have done this?

When Mr. Major descanted at the dinner-table, which was crowded with ‘Yellows’ that evening, upon his friend’s admirable speech, everybody expressed their satisfaction that so mean a trick of the opposite party had met with so signal a failure.

‘I wonder who was the man who did it? He must have been more fool than knave,’ said one.

Then Mr. Major chuckled, and said, ‘You must take care what you are saying. For my part, I think it was neither fool nor knave, but a very honest clever fellow.’

Then of course everybody knew that he meant Pennicuick.

That gentleman denied the impeachment, but in so suspicious a manner that it was as good as an acknowledgment of its truth. If he had had time to think about the affair coolly, perhaps he would not have done this: he would have felt that such a bit of strategy was much more clever than creditable to him: but his mind was too troubled to consider the matter; he only felt relief that it had got explained in some way, and his reserve protected him from cross-examination. The guests too, if they had been less flushed by their party triumph, and not so brimful of electioneering sentiments, would probably not have expressed such admiration for the *ruse*. Fortunately for the interests they held so dear, the report of Mr. Pennicuick's connivance in the thing did not get abroad before the election was over; and as matters were, the incident gained them, as Mr. Major had prophesied, a large number of votes. A good deal is excused to Party tactics, but a mean device, even in electioneering warfare, is held by most Englishmen in contempt. The thing which is expressed in the vulgar tongue as 'an infernal shame' is repudiated by Blue and Yellow and all the colours of the rainbow with us, as it is repudiated nowhere else. In vain Sir James Tremaine and Mr. Warren issued a joint manifesto which denied all complicity in setting up the obnoxious placard: in vain the Blue 'organ' published a special edition that same evening, explaining how 'the contract for the hoarding had been undertaken by our esteemed fellow-townsmen Messrs. Deal and Maple, whose names would be a guarantee against any such ill behaviour. The occurrence in question had taken them as much by surprise as anyone, but investigations were being made, and it seemed that some London hand, recently taken on in their employment, had been at the bottom of the mischief.'

All this was read at leisure, twenty-four hours afterwards, and accompanied by much more, not in the present edition, to the effect that the whole affair had been an infamous device of the enemy; but in the mean time there was no time for reading, but only for talking of the Yellow candidate's admirable defence, and for voting.

As man after man ascended the steps of the polling booth, you might see them turn round, and point to the ruins of the hoarding and converse with one another evidently about that 'infernal shame.' Mr. Pierrepont did not come to Slowcomb in person—he worked like Moltke in his closet, and marshalled his battalions with the pen—but his advice was implicitly followed. Mr. Pennicuick's voters polled early. At eleven o'clock the numbers stood—Pennicuick 400, Tremaine 368, Warren 350. The disparity

between the two last, small as it was, was not Sir James's fault; some tenant-farmers would not vote to their feudal chieftain's disadvantage even at his express command. 'If we can only keep ahead till the afternoon,' said Mr. Major, 'Pierrepont thinks we shall be safe.'

'Why?' inquired Mr. Pennicuick innocently.

'Oh, I suppose he relies on the prestige. There are some men who will never vote except upon the winning side.'

Then Pennicuick understood that Mr. Pierrepont was really a great commander, and knew his men. He had entrusted the key of his position to his employer only, feeling confident that it would be safe with him. If good-natured frank-speaking Mr. Major had had it in his possession it might have slipped out of his hands, and Sir James might have been warned of his danger. At four o'clock the relative position of the three candidates remained unchanged. Pennicuick had 910 votes, Sir James had 890, Mr. Warren had 876.

It now seemed almost certain that the Yellow candidate would come in, and in all probability at the head of the poll. But some of the stauncher Blues said, 'No; Pennicuick might come in (and be hanged to him!), but it would be seen that Sir James would be above him. For when Warren saw clearly he had no chance, he would tell his men to plump for the Baronet (without whose aid he would have been absolutely nowhere), and at least put this interloping Whig in the second place.' At five o'clock, when the poll closed, these prophets had the mortification of reading the following result:

Mr. Pennicuick	950
Mr. Warren	920
Sir James Tremaine	908

And much as they detested Pennicuick in consequence, they hated Warren more. For they had the intelligence to understand the tactics when accomplished which Mr. Pierrepont's sagacity had foreseen. Mr. Major was wild with joy, and congratulated the new member for Slowcomb with genuine enthusiasm.

'Those 950 will cost me just three pounds a head,' said that gentleman ruefully, though in reality he was well pleased. For the moment his success and the novelty of his position monopolized his attention; and he almost began to think that by getting a seat in Parliament he had obtained his end. Except for that public allusion to Dhulang, he had been really almost free from mental trouble while at 'The Andirons,' and he felt now that he had really received a fillip. He slept better that night than he had done for months; and he awoke with sensations which, compared

with his ordinary state of mind at that time, could be almost called elation.

More than one eminent man has recorded his feelings on finding himself, for the first time, a member of the British Legislature, in terms highly complimentary to that body (though, to be sure, it was before they mixed with it), but no such pride of position was experienced by Mr. Pennicuick; he had by far too good an opinion of his own place in the world to be moved by any consideration of that kind. But he was very pleased that he had secured the article for which he was to pay his money, and also that his reputation for getting what he had a fancy for would now stand higher than ever: for some folks had ventured to say that Ralph Pennicuick was not cut out for electioneering, and would be certain to fail in paying due attention to the interesting children of his constituents.

He found his host in equally good spirits in his morning-room, where they were generally accustomed to meet and have a few words of business together before breakfast.

‘How is my honourable friend the member for Slowcomb?’ was his cheerful greeting; but Mr. Pennicuick’s quick eye noticed that there was something else in his mind beside congratulations, and told him so at once.

‘What a clever fellow you are, Pennicuick!’ answered he admiringly; ‘well, yes, I just wanted to say two words to you about that Dhulang placard. The Blue papers this morning are full of it; and though I myself thought it a telling trick at the time, I am now inclined to think it was a mistake. I am afraid you will be worried about it a good deal to-day.’

‘I don’t see how I can possibly be worried, since I had nothing whatever to do with it. I saw your mistake all along, my dear Mr. Major, but I didn’t think it worth while to correct it. You chose to get it into your head that I had put that placard up myself.’

‘Most certainly I did, and every voter in Slowcombe has by this time got it into *his* head.’

‘But for all that I didn’t do it, and I never said I did.’

‘I don’t mean you did it with your own hands, but—’

‘I do assure you, my dear sir,’ interrupted Pennicuick gravely, ‘that I knew nothing whatever about that disgraceful proceeding. It may have been foolish—I now perceive it was—to have allowed it to be supposed I did. But I give you my honour that I am as innocent of the whole matter as you are yourself.’

‘Very good; you must tell them that on the hustings,’ replied Mr. Major, but in a tone which implied, ‘You must tell that to the

Horse Marines.' 'Let us have our breakfast' (after *that*, was what his face added). It was plain he didn't believe him.

Pennicuick was furious, but there was nothing left for him but silence. If this ironmonger would not believe a gentleman's word of honour, there was an end of the matter; and there was this advantage about it, that such an insult wiped out at once all his gratitude for the hospitality that had been offered to him at 'The Audirons,' and relieved him from all sense of obligation. It was curious, of course, that Pennicuick should have felt so very touchy about his word of honour, which had been so infamously broken in respect to his dead friend; but, like a lady who has 'slipped in her time,' he was on that very account all the more tender of his reputation; and, moreover, it is to be observed that nothing aggravates your criminal so much as to be accused of a crime he did not commit, though he has committed fifty others worse.

As to the placard itself, Pennicuick had come to the conclusion that it had been merely a hap-hazard device of the enemy—a shaft shot at a venture, and need not give him any disturbance. It was known through the newspapers that he had been at a place called Dhulang, and that something dreadful had occurred there; that mistake in the first telegram might have suggested some wrongdoing on his part; and hence this vague attack upon his character. Except for Mr. Major's observations (which had, however, infused more of bitterness in his cup of triumph than he would have liked to own) he would have been inclined to treat the whole affair with contempt. And he resolved, henceforward, not to speak, and if possible not to think about it again. But in this he was reckoning not only without his host, but in ignorance of the dimensions which the affair had assumed within the last four hours—that is, since the publication of that admirable Conservative organ the *Slowcombe Intelligencer*.

As he entered his carriage-and-four with Mr. Major to go down to the Town Hall, his ears were saluted even by his own supporters with words which, though they meant encouragement, gave him the keenest annoyance. 'Stick to it, Pennicuick!' 'Tell a lie, and tell a good 'un!' 'Say it was *me*!' and (this brought down a storm of cheers) 'Say it was Warren, for it's just like him!' were cries that convinced him that his host's views of the matter were shared by his own party, and that his determination to deny having had any hand in the affair had been already circulated—as, indeed, it was highly necessary should be done. From the 'Blue' faction, who had only heard that he was the guilty party, and not the denial of his guilt, he was received by yells of indignation, delivered in that high pitch of nasal frenzy to which the vocal

organs of no other nation but our own have, I really believe, attained. 'Yah, yah, trickster!' 'Yellow sneak, Yellow sneak!' 'Dhulang, Dhulang!' and similar outpourings testified to their sense of his iniquity, and also, perhaps, of the success that had attended its commission. But the conviction that it was a dirty trick to play, and unworthy of any candidate, was general, and also—it was impossible to ignore the fact—that he, Ralph Pennicuick, was the man who had played it.

It was anything but consolatory to him that some of his more thorough-going supporters of the lower rank were prepared to justify his supposed conduct. Their 'Quite right too!' 'Who cares? you've won the day,' were perhaps the most galling of all the cries that met his ear. That triumphal entry of his into his own borough, instead of being, as he was presently to call it, 'the proudest moment of his life,' was perhaps the most humiliating portion of it. The innocent, it is said, do not feel such degradations; but Pennicuick felt it the more bitterly for the very reason that he was innocent. It did not strike him that he had his own villany to thank for it, since, but for that, the circumstances could never have arisen.

His appearance on the hustings—for, being at the head of the poll, he was the first to speak—was the signal for an outburst compared with which all previous manifestations sank into insignificance. It was like one of those revival meetings where the prize of salvation is supposed to be given to the loudest groaner. The cheers of the Yellows grew faint before that dull roar of execration. That idea of the 'infernal shame' had, it seemed, veered round altogether to the other side. In common, however, with many noxious persons (who often set a fancy value on their own lives and interests which is as deplorable as it is unreasonable), Ralph Pennicuick had plenty of pluck. The spectacle of this concentrated contempt and hate braced his nerves and gave vigour to his tones. 'I am sorry,' he said, 'electors of Slowcombe, once more to intrude upon you any matter personal to myself; but if anyone has told you that I had anything, directly or indirectly, to do with that placard about Dhulang, he has told a lie.' The uproar was here so tremendous that he had to wait for several minutes for a hearing. 'If anyone here believes it, he is an idiot; if anyone here has repeated it, he has propagated a falsehood.' This was indiscreet, for as all present did believe it, even including his own party, and had talked about nothing else that morning, he had simply given everyone the alternative of being a fool or a knave. The storm of disapprobation was such that there was nothing for it but for the brass band of the Yellows to strike up

'See the Conquering Hero comes,' and thereby to remind honest folks that, whatever might be said against the man of their choice, the Good Cause had triumphed. The cheering was henceforward as continuous as the hissing; but between these Mr. Pennicuick's oration was lost until the next day, when it duly appeared in the newspapers. His whole speech was, in fact, delivered in dumb show.

Then he had to listen to Mr. Warren's speech, which would have been received almost as ill as his own but for his supposed delinquency, upon which the hon. gentleman dwelt long and unctuously. His faculty of going round and round a subject, without ever actually going into it, was here invaluable to him. He contrived to express his own belief in his honourable opponent's innocence of the trick laid to his charge, while at the same time leaving the impression of his guilt upon the audience twice as strong as it was before. Ere he had finished speaking, handbills, printed on Mr. Major's advice, were circulating among the crowd, offering 500*l.* reward to anyone who would discover the actual perpetrator of the offence in question: but the only effect of this was to cause a costermonger of Conservative opinions and excellent lungs to call out at the highest pitch of his voice, 'I know the man: his name is Ralph Pennicuick: so hand me over the money.' The roar of laughter that greeted this sally was the only good-natured thing in the whole proceedings.

When the ordeal was over, and Pennicuick, before descending among the howling throng, turned to bid his host good-bye—for his traps had been already despatched from the villa to the railway station—Mr. Major had disappeared.

The hon. member for Slowcomb understood at once that the hospitable ironmonger objected to shake hands with him. He had done his best for his candidate up to the very last, even to the suggestion of the offer of the reward; so much he owed to his party: but

The hand of Major was his own,
And never would in friendly grasp
The hand of such as this man clasp.

In his opinion, Pennicuick was guilty of a most audacious falsehood, and Mr. Major had a prejudice against even courageous lying. 'It is very hard,' said this honest fellow to his wife when he got home, 'that we should be so unfortunate in our candidates. The last one was a rogue, and this one is a knave at the very least.'

'If you will meddle with politics, Sam,' answered that sensible woman, 'you must expect such things. You can't touch pitch and have clean hands.' Then, with that inconsistency which distinguishes her sex, she added, 'I do hope next time you will not

be so diffident, but insure the borough an honest representative by standing for it yourself.'

As we here take leave of this good fellow, I may say at once that when the opportunity arrived he took his wife's advice, and became, if not a shining light in Parliament, a very good burner, never flickering this way and that with the popular breath; in short, dropping metaphor, the best member that Slowcomb ever sent to the House of Commons.

That Mr. Samuel Major, formerly an ironmonger in this country town, should thus withdraw his countenance from Mr. Pennicwick, filled that gentleman with rage rather than regret. If he was so pigheaded as to believe he had put up that placard, in spite of his positive assertion to the contrary, let him believe it: but at the same time it was a most infernal piece of impertinence that he should do so. As to the borough with which he had just professed himself identified heart and soul, he hated the sight of it, and could hardly keep his face from showing it to the crowd of supporters who, with waving of hats and rounds of cheers, accompanied him to the very door of his railway carriage.

The first words that he uttered softly to himself, as the train glided out of the station and as he lay back in his cushioned corner, were, 'Curse the place and all that's in it!' Which was not grateful in the Honourable Member for Slowcomb.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF GREATNESS.

A GREAT author has described his feelings on waking one morning under the very same roof which sheltered Mr. Ralph Pennicwick, and 'finding himself famous'; this no doubt is very pleasant when publicity breaks upon us in that engaging form. Even to find oneself notorious and not famous is gratifying to some minds, though I do not personally sympathize with them. I can remember—it is very many years ago, alas!—when the words of the critics used to go through and through me: when they called me a fool, I shivered; when they touched my trembling ears with praise, I glowed. It seems now as if every publishing season had given me another skin, I am grown so very pachydermatous. Still, if the papers were to call me a Rogue, I suppose I should feel *that*. How much more keenly did Mr. Ralph Pennicwick, who had not been used to have publicity conferred upon him, feel his position, when he woke on the morning after his election for Slowcombe and found himself—'*infamous*'! He had flattered himself that what had taken place in the obscure borough of Slowcombe would never

he narrated much beyond its limits ; he had no idea that, by becoming a Member of Parliament, he had not only become a public character, but a public enemy, at least in the eyes of one great section of the body politic. He had turned out a Conservative member, and thereby had caused—though it is true in common with some others—the righteous indignation of the whole Conservative Press. If he had been beaten they would have dismissed him with a few words of contempt—just a kick or two administered to his prostrate body ; but as he had triumphed, they rained on him shot and shell and especially that description of missile used in Chinese warfare (and therefore familiar to him) called ‘stink pots.’ He was, they of course said, ‘a mischievous interloper ;’ but he also combined two characteristics seldom found in the same individual ; he was at once both a Jerry Sneak and a Baron Munchausen : a cunning trickster and a most audacious liar. Worse than all, the word *Dhulang*, for which Pennicuick’s eye sought with feverish apprehension up and down each envenomed page, was repeated everywhere. No definite charge, indeed, was made against him, but nothing that malicious innuendo could suggest was wanting. It was hinted that he had taken Conway’s fate in a very philosophic manner—‘it was well known that Mr. Ralph Pennicuick was a Stoic philosopher in his manner of enduring the misfortunes of his friends ; that he had not hurried himself to procure a reprieve from the Chinese Government ; and that, though very wealthy, he had spared his money at a time when it might have saved his friend, in order that he might spend it with a lavish hand on the venal electors of Slowcomb.’

His offer of the 500*l.* reward for the discovery of the actual perpetrator of the placard trick was treated with particular scorn. One of the papers had even calculated the cost of the handbill at thirty shillings, which it said was the sole expense to which this apparently handsome conduct could possibly put Mr. Ralph Pennicuick. The Liberal papers, it is true, upheld his conduct as irreproachable and his motives as pure as the untrodden snow ; but that was, as it were or as it seemed, a matter of course.

It is very small satisfaction when twelve men out of a jury box announce their belief in your innocence of a crime of which twelve men *in* a jury box have declared you guilty. He had been ‘put upon his trial’—so ran the very words of one influential organ—‘before the electors of Slowcombe, and if there had been only time’ (and this was probably true enough) ‘for them to have considered his case, their verdict would have been a very different one. As it was, it’ (the organ) ‘wished them joy of their brand-new representative.’ He could not complain that his own words had been

misrepresented, for his speech on the hustings was reproduced in each paper with the usual fidelity: they simply refused to believe his assertions.

Ralph Pennicuick was almost out of his mind with rage and terror: rage at the insult thus unjustly heaped upon him, and terror at the growing influence which that wrongdoing of his at Dhulang was exercising over his life. It was marvellous—nay, it was miraculous—that that deed done in a corner, thousands of miles from his native land, and from civilization itself, without a witness except certain savages all interested in keeping silence on the matter, should be making this stir on English soil. It was almost enough to make a man believe in an overruling Providence, or at all events in a Nemesis of some sort that awaited the transgressor; and then again the question recurred to him (which he had hoped was stifled) as to who had put up that terrible placard, ‘Inquire at Dhulang, China.’ Such hideous results had flowed from it, that he could now hardly deem it a haphazard blow.

While he was still at his toilet—which had become rather a protracted affair, and lucky it was for him that he did not shave, for his nerves were in no condition to hold a razor—Raymond looked in, though he had called on the previous evening to congratulate his father, it must be confessed in rather a mechanical manner, on his success.

‘Well, my knight of the rueful countenance, how goes it?’ inquired the elder Pennicuick, who in the presence of a fellow-creature could be generally ‘himself again.’ ‘I hope your political opinions will not prevent your sitting down with your father to breakfast, though he is the Whig member for Slowcombe.’

‘I will sit down with you with pleasure, sir, though I have long breakfasted. As for politics, they are matters that I never cared much about, and care less for now than ever.’

‘Thank you,’ interrupted the other sharply.

‘Nay, sir, I did not mean as respected your new connection with them—that of course gives them a personal interest for me: but when one has troubles of one’s own, the affairs of the British Constitution—speaking generally—do not hold any large space in one’s thoughts. It was, however, about this election matter that I have come to you this morning. I suppose you have not seen the newspapers?’

‘I have seen some,’ answered the other carelessly. He had thrust half a dozen of them under the bed when he heard his son’s voice in the passage.

‘There are, I am sorry to say, some remarks of an offensive nature in one or two of them,’ said Raymond gravely.

‘I have not a doubt of it, my lad,’ answered the other cheerfully.

The Tories are very sore at the result of the elections, and I dare say they do not owe me much love for winning a seat from them at Slowcombe.’

‘I make allowance for party feeling, sir; but personal accusations have been made, and it seems to me of such a kind that they should be answered.’

Mr. Pennicuick desisted for a moment from trimming his once universally admired beard with some elaborate instrument of the toilet, to smile good-naturedly upon his offspring.

‘How charming it is to find you still so young, Raymond! Is it possible that you have reached the legal years of discretion, and yet can advocate a man’s attempting to set himself right with a newspaper? It was done once—by Richard Cobden, if I remember rightly—and with tolerable success; but the exception only proves the rule. If a Bengal tiger tore the clothes off your back, you wouldn’t go and ask him for them, I suppose, nor yet for an apology. If you couldn’t shoot him—and you can’t in this case—you’d be glad to leave the beast alone.’

‘Still, there are questions of fact, sir, which it is desirable should be made known. I don’t know how you may take things now in a Parliamentary sense, but when I read in the paper that my father has told a lie, that makes my blood boil.’

‘Does, it, indeed, my lad?’ replied the other coolly. ‘What a very bad state your blood must be in! A newspaper—and especially a Tory newspaper—will say anything. The only question that the person of whom it says it has to consider is, Is that paper worth powder and shot? You can only make it feel by means of an action for libel. Now’ (this with a light touch of scorn), ‘is it worth my while to bring one?’

It was an admirable piece of acting. You would have said this man was of iron; utterly impervious to the whips and stings of which he spoke.

‘Well, it is not the insult that moves me so much, father,’ answered Raymond hesitatingly, ‘as what these blackguards have said about your behaviour to—that is, about what happened at Dhulang. Everybody knows, who knows anything about it, how loyally you stuck by your friend. And these innuendoes are abominable. Have you any personal enemy, do you think, who, knowing something of what you did, endeavours thus cruelly to misrepresent it?’

It took Ralph Pennicuick ‘all he knew,’ as he would have himself phrased it, to keep his colour here, and to prevent his hands from trembling. It was horrible to think that the very

idea which had haunted him since that nomination day at Slowcombe should have occurred thus naturally to his son.

‘Enemies, my lad!—why, of course I have enemies. The man must be a cipher indeed who has not made such.’

‘But did you make one in China?’

Pennicuick’s mind reverted to Fu-chow, and he gave a ghastly smile. He had certainly nothing to fear from that obscure barbarian, though he would even yet have liked to cut his pigtail off and his head with it.

‘The whole Chinese race are my enemies,’ said he quietly, ‘but I have no quarrel with anyone in particular.’

‘I of course refer to some European; and one who has communications with this country.’

‘I know of no such foe, my lad,’ said Pennicuick thoughtfully.

‘Well, there is some malicious scoundrel at work in this matter, sir, I feel confident: and fortunately we can dispose of his slanders. Milburn, who accompanied you when you returned to Dhulang, will, I am sure, write to the papers—’

‘Not a word,’ interrupted the other violently; ‘I will not have a syllable written upon the subject. Pray permit me to manage my own affairs, sir.’ His face was pale with passion, but he controlled himself. ‘Come, my lad, let us go to breakfast.’

On the table, duly spread for that meal, was a large heap of letters. ‘Ah, this is what comes of being an M.P.! I have no doubt everybody is wanting everything.’ He ran his eye over the addresses. ‘Yes: I thought so; strangers every one of them. They want churches endowed, chapels built, the Liberal cause supported—that is to say, from 5*l.* to 50*l.*—every one of them. I wish they may get it.’

‘I know that handwriting,’ observed Raymond, pointing to one of these communications, ‘and I will promise you it is not a begging letter. It is from Mr. Wardlaw.’

‘Wardlaw? What on earth should he be writing to me about?’

He opened the letter, and, having rapidly scanned the contents, threw it down with an execration.

‘I hope there is nothing the matter, sir,’ said Raymond, who feared there might be some evil news from Sandybeach. He did not love Nelly the less because he had lost her.

The elder Pennicuick in his selfish egotism forgot the cause which had aroused his son’s anxiety.

‘Matter? There, you may read it for yourself if you like. *It is monstrous—it is infamous, that I am to be persecuted by*

every human being upon this infernal subject.' And he threw the open letter across the table.

Raymond read as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—The interest which you have so strongly manifested in Miss Ellen Conway must be my excuse for addressing you concerning a matter that affects her nearly. She has, to our great distress, suddenly resolved upon leaving our roof—or rather the house that has for the last few months represented it—and on maintaining herself, in London, on her own slender resources and the small pecuniary aid which her pencil may afford her. The reason of this I need not go into; she is quite determined upon the subject, and will no doubt carry out her intention. It is in vain that we have besought her to accept, even for the present, such assistance from us as would at least put her above the necessity of practising what I fear must be called sordid economies. She will take nothing, she says, but what she earns or *to which she has a right*. The poor soul, though (as my wife says, who loves her like her own child) she deserves everything, has a right, as far as we know, to nothing. Still, it strikes us both that there is a course by which she may be benefited through your means, though, as I understand, she has refused to do so at your expense. I had the pleasure of reading the telegram to-day which announced your return for Slowcombe. Now, it is certain that a Member of the House of Commons can call attention to anything that has been done amiss far better than any private individual, and I venture to suggest therefore that you will press upon the Ministry, of which it seems you are a supporter, the propriety of doing something for Miss Conway in the way of pension. Her father, it is true, was not killed while on military service, and it was even urged, I believe, when the matter was before mooted, that he was put to death for a grave offence which insulted the whole Chinese nation through their religion, and, in short, admitted of no palliation, far less of recompense. You, however, will be in a position to state the facts of the case, which, from poor Nelly's own account of her father's character, I can scarcely believe are in accordance with these statements. You have already shown your willingness to assist this dear good girl with your purse; I am sure, therefore, you will not refuse—since that sort of private aid is distasteful to her—to give your voice to the advocacy of her claims in Parliament. No one so well knows as you do what actually occurred at Dhulang, and, as the nearest friend of her father, you are certainly the fittest man to undertake her cause. The dear girl has made up her mind to go to her old lodgings in Gower Street, the landlady of which is a kind motherly sort of woman, she says, and where, it seems, there is a room suitable for a studio. Her first step will be to provide herself with some suitable drawing-master—so that she will have to educate as well as to clothe and feed herself upon what is, in fact, a mere pittance. The urgency of the case will therefore, I am sure, excuse my addressing you upon the matter.

I am, dear sir,

Yours truly,

JOHN WARDLAW.

'Now, what do you think of that?' said Ralph Pennicuick peevishly. 'You know this fellow well; *I don't*—at least, scarcely to nod to; and yet he writes to dictate to me what I am to do as soon as I take my seat in Parliament. I call it a most infernal liberty. As to Miss Nelly, I have not a word to say against her.' So furious was his mood, that he now remembered for the first time

that there had been a love affair between the two young people. 'But I put it to you, Raymond; if you were in my place, would you not think it deuced hard?'

'However hard it was, father, I should take care that no effort of mine was wanting, were I you, to urge my dead friend's daughter's claim, as Mr. Wardlaw suggests. She, unhappily, refuses aid from those who would think it an honour and a pleasure to help her, and therefore there is no resource for her but a public grant. It is plain she will be in penury, if not in absolute want——'

'That's her own fault, sir,' broke in the other petulantly. She is too proud to take anybody's money, though, as you are a witness, I have offered her enough and to spare. Her view—quite contrary to that entertained by those who won't go into the workhouse—is that it is less humiliating to become a pensioner of the State.'

'I don't see that that is her view at all, sir. Mr. Wardlaw takes it for granted that it is so, and that is all we know about it.'

'Very true; a very just remark, Raymond,' observed the other approvingly. 'We have no evidence that the young lady herself had anyhand in this singular—this most unjustifiable—application. She may not even approve of it.'

'Very likely, sir; indeed, I feel confident that she is ignorant of Mr. Wardlaw's having written to you; and I think it only too likely that she would have scruples about making capital (as it may seem to her) out of her poor father's murder. I can easily imagine her shrinking from the public disclosures it would be necessary to make regarding the catastrophe itself.'

'And very right too,' put in the elder Pennicuick. 'Such feelings do her honour, and I would be the last man to wound them. Moreover, I will credit her with appreciating the great inconvenience that the course proposed would entail on me. Why, sir, I should have to demand of the Prime Minister a night all to myself to bring the matter before Parliament. Among the "notices of motion" you would see, "Ralph Pennicuick, to ask the Government why a pension has not been conferred on the orphan daughter of the late Captain Arthur Conway, put to death in March last by order of the Imperial Government of China," &c., &c. I shall be looked upon like one of those melancholy bores who insist upon having their say concerning the Begum of Badrapore and her hereditary claim of seven millions of rupees, and other horrid Indian matters. It would be making me supremely ridiculous, and be unspeakably distressing into the bargain. You must see that yourself.'

‘It would be distressing, of course, sir, and doubtless disagreeable in many ways,’ answered Raymond gravely; ‘but if you ask my opinion, and supposing the young lady is in favour of the application being made, it seems to me you have no option but to undertake it. Consider, sir, the position of this orphan girl in London, alone and unfriended, endeavouring to earn a scanty pittance by her pencil, while you, the nearest friend of her dead father, prosperous and in good position, do not stir a finger to help her. I am sorry to distress you, sir, but, believe me, I speak on your own account as much as upon hers; would not such a state of things, I say, give grounds, and apparently solid ones, for accusations which are now, thank Heaven, baseless and contemptible, but which in that case I, for my part, should blush to read?’

The expression of Ralph Pennicuick’s face, who, at the commencement of this impassioned speech, had stared at his son with angry eyes, had wholly altered during its progress. It had worn such a look of mute appeal when Raymond painted Nelly’s wretched condition, that you would have thought the description of it had pierced his listener’s very heart (as indeed it did); and now, when Raymond spoke of what his own feelings would be if his father should refuse to urge Nelly’s plea, should she herself desire it, it changed again to an expression of patient but pained submission.

‘You are too impetuous, Raymond—far too impetuous, and you take advantage of my—what is the word?—yes, my failing health. But if the girl wishes it—mind that, if she really wishes it—and if you think it my duty, and if I am equal to it—you’ll just write to Wardlaw for me and say *that*—if I am *equal* to it—the thing shall be done.—Now I think,’ here his tones assumed their old petulance, ‘you have done me enough of mischief for one morning, and—oh, I have no doubt you didn’t mean to kill me, but when one is out of health one doesn’t want to be pulled down still lower by bad news and—and—disagreeable talk. And if you will kindly ring the bell, Raymond, Hatton will show you *out*.’

It was quite true that the young man’s visit had done his father harm. When his son had left the room Ralph Pennicuick fell back in his chair as a dying man lies, at length, from sheer feebleness.

‘They will kill me amongst them,’ he murmured. ‘I could never stand it—that speech in the House of Commons about *him*. It would be one lie from first to last. Alone and unfriended—a scanty pittance—and *his* daughter. It is frightful every way.’ His face was so ghastly that, as he pulled out a drawer in the breakfast-table and produced a bottle, a looker-on would have said,

‘Why, this man is going to put an end to his life.’ It was, however, only some brandy, which he poured from the bottle into his cup of coffee, and drank with a trembling hand.

CHAPTER XL.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

GRIEF, it is said, does not always disincline ladies to love; indeed, there is a famous classical story—I am not classical myself, only devout, and I have read it as it appears in Jeremy Taylor—of a widow who, even while weeping over her husband’s tomb, became filled with the tender passion for somebody else; and at all events, grief forbids mere flirtation and makes matters serious. So, in Miss Ellen Conway’s case, though she never thought of Love, her very sorrows made her more accessible, as I have said, to one who it was easy for anyone else but herself to see had become her lover. To her the talk about her father and his fate was so incongruous with any notion of ‘being courted,’ that it did not occur to her that she was undergoing that operation; but Mr. Herbert Milburn was not for his part so overcome with melancholy but that he could think of other things than the Tomb—such as the Altar. Another thing, too, conduced to the young people being ‘thrown together’ more than would otherwise have been the case, namely, Miss Milburn’s opposition. By Nelly it was simply disregarded; but ‘dear Herbert’ resented it exceedingly, and redoubled his attentions to his fair enslaver in consequence.

After a few weeks he was summoned to London again on business for a day or two, and then it was for the first time that Nelly felt—through her sense of loss—how agreeable a companion he had been to her. If her mere affection for each had been weighed, it would probably have been found that she liked Mrs. Wardlaw much the better of the two; but then Milburn could sympathise with her, while her kind hostess could only pity and pet her. The young rogue affected to encourage her views of independence and artistic toil—though in his heart he intended to knock all such projects on the head by marrying her—while Mrs. Wardlaw utterly scoffed at them. ‘She had no patience with such nonsense,’ she said. ‘What did Heaven send us friends for but to make use of them!’

There was a certain generous scorn about her, which I venture to think was as fine in its way as those Spartan precepts about living on a crust of one’s own winning which Nelly preached, and indeed burnt to practise. She was getting convinced that her skill with her pencil was retrograding rather than improving, and *that she must place herself under professional guidance.*

In vain Mr. Herbert Milburn had recommended himself as a competent teacher. 'You draw no better than I do, sir, nor yet so well,' she had replied, which was quite true, as he laughingly acknowledged. Now that he was gone she missed his laugh, his gentle, earnest talk, and perhaps (though she would not have called it by that name) even his devotion.

More thoughtful than usual, but with her thoughts fixed on her future, not her past, she took her solitary way one afternoon along the shore. Some fancy—or it might be a disinclination to choose the favourite route that had so often been enlivened by his companionship—made her seek the southern bay, where the projecting cliffs were steep and high, and the beach level and sandy without a stone. As she crossed the jetty she passed an artist at his work; his colour-box was on the stone step, and she inadvertently struck it with her foot. 'I beg your pardon, sir.'

'Nay, it was my fault, not yours,' said he.

The words were commonplace, but the voice attracted her by its exceeding gentleness. He was an old man—or rather looked like a man prematurely old; his brown hair and beard were plentifully streaked with grey, and his face was sharp and worn—as though it had been held to the grindstone by harsh Fate. His eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, flamed at her with an expression such as she had seen the hungry wear in sight of food exposed in shops, and which would have frightened her but for the softness of his speech. If the poor man looked mad—and that idea did strike her—he certainly looked harmless. He was long past the time of life at which landscape painters are seen sitting about in the late autumn, even at Sandybeach, and, judged by his attire, was far from prosperous. Perhaps at his age, thought she, it might come to pass she might have met with the same ill-success, and wear as despairing looks as he did.

He had risen as she passed, but sat down at once again very hastily: his shrunken limbs trembled excessively and seemed unable to support him. Nelly felt sorry for him, but her own sorrow presently monopolised her mind, and she forgot all about him; she forgot, too, the time, the place, and the warnings she had received not to linger in Blackness Bay during the spring tides. She was walking to and fro on the dry firm sand when suddenly she looked up and saw the two arms of the bay already projecting far into the sea, and the stern face of the sheer cliff cutting off her escape to landward. The wind was blowing fresh, and from the south, that is towards Sandybeach, but she felt that she was too far from the village for a cry for help to reach it. Still she knew that was her only chance, for though there were ships in sight they were

miles and miles away, and she could scarcely have been seen from them had she stood on the cliff against the sky instead of on the shore with the dark cliff behind her, which must have seemed almost one with her black dress. Her mind, always alive to 'colour,' seized on this fact almost as soon as it grasped the awful peril of her situation.

In all probability she was doomed to die. Before the sunset came and painted yonder ocean with its gorgeous hues, she would be lying beneath it. She was too young for this awful thought not to affect her exceedingly. Now that Death was so near she no longer yearned for it as she had seemed to do of late, but would have very willingly escaped it. She had no fears of the superstitious kind, but, strange to say, the idea that she was about to meet her parents, which hitherto had been so familiar to her, did not now occur to her. Her thoughts, after the first few moments of physical fear, wandered back instead of forward—to her childhood; the enclosed space—narrowing with such frightful speed—in which she found herself, reminded her of some familiar scene in which Raymond and she had been placed during a visit to some other point of the coast, and which they had 'made believe' to be in a similar danger. The cliffs in that case had been easily accessible, but it had been the children's fancy to suppose it otherwise. 'Now,' said Raymond, who was for ever reading books of peril and adventure, 'we must cry "Help," because that word goes far; and the way to cry it is this: turn your back to the wind, and hollow your two hands—so—and then shout.' Every word of good advice is a seed that depends upon the soil on which it falls for life, and on occasion for development. Raymond's words seemed to fall upon her ear exactly as they had done half a score of years ago, and she put both her little hands together (firm they were as the fluted capital of a pillar), and shouted 'Help, help!' to the eager wind. It sped upon its course carrying this plaintive music with it, round the southern arm of the bay, till the sound grew faint and was left for dead upon the jetty.

Its last breath, however, caused the old artist, who was still sitting on the same step, to start up and listen. It would not have been so had he been attending to his work: but neither pencil nor brush had he touched since Nelly went by him two hours ago. He had been staring out to sea, and frowning and muttering to himself, and at times giving a great sigh and shutting his eyes, as though nothing was worth looking at: when presently over his face would steal a gentle smile, and the tears would fall two by two, without a sound.

He might not, as Nelly suspected, have had all his five senses



'At last he conquered.'

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about him, but he had certainly the sense of hearing ; for, faint as it was, he had caught that inarticulate cry. It might have been the whimper of a sea-bird for all that he could gather from it, but it had been sufficient to arouse his earnest attention. He too, like Raymond, had read books of travel and adventure, or had perhaps, in visiting savage lands himself, had occasion to practise shifts and expedients, for he turned the curled brim of his wide-awake into the shape of what is called a coal-scuttle bonnet, and under that improvised sounding-board looked all ear.

Again the piteous sound came wailing round the point, and died like a ghost on the same spot, as it had died before ; but this time, because he had been waiting for it, he recognised it for what it was.

He started to his feet, and hurried down the sea-worn slippery steps of the jetty as well as his weak limbs would permit ; when in motion you could see clearly how feeble and shattered was his frame. Indeed, since walking was such a toil to him, he had come even the short distance from Sandybeach in a boat, which lay moored close by.

He scrambled into this, and seized the oars with trembling hands. The wind was dead against him, and his arms were weak, but the will, as you could read in his glittering eyes, was strong within him, and in his first few strokes you saw that he was familiar with the oar. He had an oarsman's intelligence, too, for he urged the boat up to the promontory and then along under its lee, instead of making straight for its head. The rounding this against wind and tide was his difficulty, and it strained all his powers. The sweat came out upon his forehead, and his lungs laboured with his labouring arms, and for minutes—that seemed to him years—the issue hung in doubt, but at last he conquered and reached the comparatively smooth water of the bay beyond.

At the edge of its semicircle, on a mere ridge of sand, which in a quarter of an hour would be sea, stood Nelly, with one hand fluttering a handkerchief, with the other shading her eyes as she gazed on the coming succour ; directly she had caught sight of the black stem of the boat she had ceased to call for help. She felt sure that help was coming—if it could. The ridge of sand had contracted to a riband when the boat reached her, but she stepped into it dryshod. She was about to pour forth her thanks to her deliverer, but he put his finger to his lips ; his face was wet, but, notwithstanding his exertions, without a trace of colour ; and his breath came in great gasps. ‘Great heaven!’ said she, ‘you are killing yourself for my sake. I am strong—I can row ; give me the oars.’

He muttered a faint protest, but she took them from his hand, and he tottered to the stern and sat down. The boat drew away from shore like an arrow, urged by her long steady strokes and by the favouring wind. She had learned how to use the oars from Raymond—the second accomplishment of his teaching which had stood her in good stead that day. Her companion's eyes regarded her with the same hungry look as before, but it no longer startled her.

When they had rounded the point, and found themselves under its protection, she ceased rowing. 'I owe you my life, sir,' said she simply. He bowed his head without speaking; but those flaming eyes began to soften, till the flame was quenched; he was weeping.

'I am ill and old,' said he, with a pained look; 'pray excuse my weakness.'

'It is your kindness, not your weakness. What am I to you, that you should have exerted yourself so nobly for my sake! How thankful I am that you are not a poor sailor, but a gentleman.'

'Why so?' he asked.

'Because you will need no recompense but the satisfaction of having done a generous action; if it were otherwise, and I gave you all I had, it would be but a small guerdon for so great a service.'

'You are poor, then?' said he sharply.

'Yes, quite poor. I am—or rather some day I hope to be—an artist like yourself, only with me it will be working for bread.'

'Ah!'

It was but a monosyllable, but it was full of significance; it was pitiful, but it had also a sort of fierceness in it. It was evident to her that this poor man was eccentric, to say the least of it; but her gratitude was due to him even if he were a madman. 'Let me know the name of my deliverer,' said she earnestly.

'Pearson,' he answered; 'but you need not make so much of the matter; I heard you cry for help, and rowed across yonder. It took me half-an-hour, it is true; a few years ago it would have taken me but five minutes.'

'You have been ill, then?'

'Yes, I was taken ill abroad; I am reduced to this;' he held out his skinny hand against the sun, which almost shone through it. 'Let us talk on a worthier subject—yourself. Who are you?'

'My name is Ellen Conway: I am an orphan, but I am staying here for the present with some kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wardlaw. You must come and receive their thanks, for they value her you have saved far beyond her merits.'

‘They are good friends to you, then?’

‘No one had ever better.’

‘And rich?’

‘Yes, they are very well off.’

‘Rich and good friends, and yet you are poor, you say. I do not understand ~~that~~ sort of friendship.’

‘Oh, it is not their fault; I ~~could~~ live with them all my life, I believe, if I were so minded; but I prefer to be independent.’

‘And you have a talent with the pencil?’

‘I sometimes think I have; at all events, I take a great pleasure in it. Perhaps it is hereditary, for my dear father did the like.’

‘He was an artist, then?’

‘No, a soldier.’

Her companion nodded and leant back in the stern with a weary air. Nelly took to her oars again, and in a few strokes brought the boat beside the jetty.

‘You are staying at the hotel, I believe, Miss Conway?’

‘Yes, I hope you will call, sir, or permit my friend Mrs. Wardlaw to call on you: I should be very sorry to lose sight of one to whom I owe so much.’

‘My lodgings are not good enough to receive ladies in,’ he answered simply; ‘but I will certainly call at the hotel.’

Nelly held out her hand; he took it and carried it rapidly to his lips, which startled her a little.

Concealing her alarm, however, she wished him ‘good-day’ with a grateful smile, and walked quickly home.

Her adventure was commonplace enough, and would have been so even if it had ended fatally; but he who had shared it with her was certainly not a common character. It was difficult to guess his age, but she put it at about fifty-five; that he was ill and poor seemed certain; also that he was eccentric to an extreme degree: but she felt that he was a gentleman and had a good heart.

(To be continued.)

Some Superstitions of the Turks.

'*KESMET tekml olahjak!*' (Fate must be presently fulfilled.)
 'Eumrunu bitirmali!' (The destiny of life must be accomplished.)
 In other words, 'You cannot change the coming Future any more than you can undo the acted Past.' This false axiom is undoubtedly the article of popular belief the most widely accepted amongst the Turks, and is the one *par excellence* held in all simplicity and sincerity by every individual man, woman, and child, in the nation, almost without exception.

'*Yazmish!*' (It is written.) 'It is ordered for us' is an instinct and confession natural to a people each one of whom knows what it is to be subject to the absolute and capricious will of another; first, in childhood, when the power and authority of the parent are supreme; next, it may be, in the self-abnegation of a slave before master or mistress; afterwards, in the abject subjection of the prisoner-wife to her husband; or, in the case of a man, in the cringing of the dependent before his patron—of the Effendi or Bey before the rich Pacha—of the Pacha *sans portefeuille* before the Heads of Departments—of the high government officials before the Grand Vizier—of the *Sadrizam* before the *Padishah*.

And the Sultan himself? He is supposed to bow in utter nothingness before an absolute Will, or a vague Fate, to which his personality is as stubble before the wind.

'*Padishah buyuk deil mē?*' (Is not the Sultan great?)
Aman, Allah Soultanieh dan daher buyuk dir!—hepseh dan daher buyuk dir!' (But, God is greater than the Sultan—He is greater than all!) Such are the terms in which the Turks will try to lead one to conceive something of the greatness of their ruler, yet of even *his* subjection to a higher will. It is a hint to see as they see, and is intended to induce an involved mental process resulting in a conviction that the *Padishah* has boundless power, so rarely does anything occur to check the will of the absolute Ruler of Turkey.

Abdul Aziz had followed the bent of his own whim when he decided to visit the lands of the Ghiaours. The result was that in the West he basked for a time in the smile of general approbation, whilst, in the East, the sun of his popularity began to decline from the time of his return there in 1867; and, as it went down, a stealthy, lengthening shadow falling from the upraised and warning finger of Fate crept towards him whom it was at last

to blot for ever out of sight. 'Kesmet' hath to be fulfilled. Abdul Aziz was a doomed man!

The doom was believed in, and it was looked for. A rumour—whispered beneath the breath and carefully kept from the hearing of Europeans—had gone abroad amongst some of the more exclusive Mussulmans of Stamboul, that 'kesmet' menaced Abdul Aziz with some great but undefined danger, and that the year 1289 of the Mussulman Era would be one fraught with great peril to the Sultan.

(How strangely those forebodings foreshadowed events to come!)

That year began in the spring of 1872. Its commencement was looked forward to with stifled apprehensions. How could the threatened danger be averted? The 'Wise Men,' it was said, had suggested one way of escape, and that was to avoid all mention of the fatal year—to let the lips of the Faithful remain closed on the dreaded date; to decree, in fact, that 1288 should be counted twice over and serve to designate two consecutive years, the latter of which was the real 1289, whose course of existence was to be thus tacitly ignored. Some went so far as to state that an Imperial decree would suppress the obnoxious date in all official documents purely Turkish. Others affirmed that the same mandate would reduce the number of those twelve unfortunate months to nine only, by making each to consist of forty instead of thirty days. As the lengthening of the month could not be accounted for by the superstitious dread of the fatal year having called forth a wish to hasten it to its end, it was affirmed by the discontented that the change was designed in order to lessen the total amount of 'aïlik' (monthly pay) due to government underlings, zaptiehs, soldiers, sailors, and others, who would thus receive payment only nine times where they should have received it twelve times. Whether this ingenious device was, or was not, carried out I could not learn, the Sublime Porte usually being in arrears as to its reckonings with those in its pay.

But the lower orders in Turkey are remarkably patient in bearing the privations which the exactions of their rulers impose on them. About this time the poorer Mussulmans of Stamboul were looking on with unabated admiration at a fine new mosque, in process of construction, which was being built at the expense of the Validé Soultan, who desired it might be named after herself, and designed it to serve hereafter as her place of burial. Day after day the beautiful structure of white hewn stone grew up; no noise of chisel or hammer was heard on the spot; the blocks were brought ready hewn and graved to be set up immediately in

their place. For, bigoted as the Validé was, it was yet necessary to employ 'Ghiaour' artisans to fashion and ornament the coping stones destined to adorn the outer walls of the building. In all probability, her '*kaiah*' (steward) did not think it imperative to inform his Imperial mistress that the work was done by other than Mussulman hands. Very probably the fact was concealed quite as carefully from the rabble of the Turkish quarter, who looked on with uninquiring eyes, thinking chiefly of the day of the opening, when there would be an illumination, and a certain *largesse* would be distributed amongst the very poor by the bounty of the Sultanas.

The day of the 'consecration' was at last fixed for April the 5th. The Validé—who usually occupied a suite of apartments in the palace where her son might happen to be residing—drove in all the pomp of a gilt state carriage from Dolma Baghtché, on the European bank of the Bosphorus, through Galata, the merchant quarter, across the bridge over the Golden Horn, and so down into Stamboul, to open the Mosque in person. The Sultan himself was not present, but his son, the youthful prince, Youssouff Izzedin (having a carriage all to himself), headed the procession. This included all the Sultanas (princesses by birth), and the *Kadens* (chief ladies of the Sultan) belonging to the various seraglios. These members of the Imperial household, on alighting at the chief entrance, had to step over the still flowing blood of sheep slain in sacrifice, no new building being taken into use without this ceremony, which is supposed to be powerful to expel the *shaitans*, or evil spirits, who are believed to lurk in all unoccupied dwellings. Special prayers were then offered within the building, whilst the carcasses of the sheep were distributed to the poor outside. It is to be presumed that the safety of the Sultan was besought on this occasion with unusual fervour; and perhaps the opening ceremony had been timed with a view to counteracting the evil influences of 1289.

The Sultan himself, after his return from Western Europe, seems to have resorted to a popular Turkish device for prolonging his days in safety. It is currently believed that '*kesmet*' respects the life of a man who is carrying on the good work of house-building; so far, at least, as to spare him till the construction is completed. Now, Abdul Aziz was not merely indulging his fancy for having yet another palace when he decided on raising a new and beautiful one at Tchiraghan, and on throwing out a wing to it that should be a miniature imitation of the Crystal Palace he had seen in England. Although the Sultan showed considerable interest in the building, it was not hastened on as one might have expected it would be to

please a sovereign impatient to behold the realisation of his idea. On the contrary, the work seemed rather to be constantly retarded on any trifling pretext. One day, when his Serene Majesty was being driven into the 'Crystal Palace' part of the slowly progressing palace, one of the wheels of his carriage jolted roughly over the projecting end of an iron girder that happened to be thrown on one side. This slight accident was taken as an omen. The pretty, light structure at once lost its charm for the Sultan: it was no longer pleasant in his eyes, since he had thus been rudely warned that the building would not be for his good. Disappointment, some said, caused the Sultan to give way to a burst of anger; and then and there the inexorable order was given that that part of the new building was to be taken down, and the design changed.

The needless expense of a few millions of piastres was disregarded, and the order was carried into effect; and the palace of Tehiraghan, with its light *façade* and shafts of many-coloured marbles, and imitation Crystal Palace *limonlik* (or greenhouse), must have cost a fabulous sum. Every care was lavished on its construction, since it was intended to be the one monument and memento of the reign of Abdul Aziz, in the same way as the Palace of Dolma Baghtché was of that of his predecessor, Abdul Medjid. If each succeeding Sultan designs to build on a like scale, the people of Turkey need be rich indeed to bear the burden. It is said that in the capital and its vicinity the present Padishah owns a dozen palaces more or less sumptuous!

But all Turks who can by any means afford it, when they begin to get into years, engage in building a new house, under the influence of the superstition to which I have alluded. I remember the case of one rich pacha who built, first, a *tchiftlik* or farm; then added to a country house he possessed inland; then ran up a spacious garden kiosk on the hills above the Bosphorus; afterwards built a large new house in the centre of the hareem buildings in town; later, added a new wing to his seaside house; next built a fine large sea-bath (itself a miniature kiosk); and afterwards pulled down the original *yali* (the house by the sea)—by no means an old building—and reconstructed it on a larger scale: all this in the space of barely five years! (About three years later he died.)

Adela Soultan, the sister of Abdul Aziz, had the courage to undertake and accomplish the completion of a palace which had been a failure in warding off death from the person who began building it. The untimely death in this case was considered such an untoward event, that for years the skeleton building remained a prominent and melancholy object—a dark, unroofed shell of hollow masonry blinking down ironically from staring, unglazed casements—

a hideous, incomplete ruin crowning one of the most picturesque sites, the tiny, sloping promontory that juts out from the Asiatic coast between Candilli and Vanikieuy, a little on the Constantinople side of the two Hissahs, or 'middle' villages, as the name imports; Anatoli (Asiatic) Hissah on the one bank, and Roumeli (European) Hissah on the other, each marked by its old round Genoese castle, showing in sober grey repose as the 'half-way house' on either coast of the winding, azure sea-way.

A similar shell of dark red brick masonry, standing close to the sea, its base almost washed by the waves, begun by some member of the Imperial family, and left incomplete at his unlooked-for death, used for years to disfigure the European shore nearer the capital; but it, too, was taken in hand at last by some enterprising 'builder,' and transfigured to a fair seeming. These and other such blots on the fair landscape about the Bosphorus were pointed out to me as evidence of the double superstition to which I have referred—namely, first, that a man's life is spared so long as he is engaged in building; but, secondly, should he die before the work has grown to completion, this of itself is a sign that such a work is 'unlucky,' or displeasing to God, and harmful to anyone who should venture to go on building it without first duly reckoning with the Unseen Powers.

At all events, as I said, no new house is ever taken into occupation without a sacrifice being offered at the door, the future inmates passing over the blood of the yet palpitating victim as they step upon the threshold; and the ceremony is designed to dislodge those evil genii—gins, imps, or mischievous spirits—whom they designate *shaitans*, *affreets*, or *ghouls*, which are supposed to people the air and infest all hollow spaces and unused, empty dwellings, possessing an increased power for evil in darkness. The *affreet* is a mere mischievous sprite; the *shaitan*, or *satan*, is an evil spirit bent on doing one bodily harm; while the *ghoul* is a vampire that preys upon human dead bodies, and carries off the living watcher if resisted.

To those who take up this paper my recital will be merely a matter of amusement for an idle half-hour, and even the element of novelty may be wanting from the fact that they have read very much the same assertions elsewhere. But as I am not writing with the mere desire to amuse or interest, I wish my readers to realise the tyranny of mind and soul which such superstitions bring with them. We must observe the evil close to us, strangely changing the ordinary characteristics of those we meet with in everyday life, before we can conceive what its shadow indicates, or in any wise estimate the depth of mental darkness that has fallen

upon the drowsy, dreaming woman of the East—like a pall covering the prone and lifeless figure of stifled Truth.

Life, that should be so bright and fair, is cankered by unfounded fears—fears which become enormous powers for evil in the hands of the unscrupulous. As an illustration of this I will narrate an incident that befell a very handsome slave girl whom I shall call *Gumuschleh Calpha* (the Silver Slave). This girl was for a year or more a resident in the same household as myself, and I therefore knew her well. She was about nineteen at the time, just perfect in timid maidenly grace verging into fair womanhood. She had been fortunate hitherto in having fallen into the hands of a kind mistress, who had reared her with wise and tender care. Her type, seldom met with, indicated noble birth, her descent being probably from a mixture of Georgian and Abhassian races. Tall and symmetrical, with a neck like a column of alabaster; a finely-formed oval face; features square-cut, but yet showing sweetness as well as firmness; a grand forehead, and straight brows over thoughtful hazel-grey eyes;—in all but her softened bearing and soft tinting she would have made a splendid model for Cleopatra at her best. For *Gumuschleh Calpha* had a gentle, demure dignity all her own, which ensured her being treated with a certain deference. And the consideration lasted whilst her mistress lived to protect her. But, unfortunately, by the death of her protectress she fell at length to the inheritance of the husband of that one friend.

Her new master had scarcely had time to pass in review his recently acquired property in slaves, when a surviving wife managed to take the girl on a visit to our household as her own attendant, leaving her there on some slight pretext of illness. The girl was shy, and slow to choose a friend and *confidante* amongst the strange *calphas* (upper slaves). This left her much alone, and threw her on her own resources in any difficulty.

Now, one great ordeal in that household was the finding one's way about at the dead of night between the different portions of the rambling building that composed the two distinct hareems, divided by a garden with towering fir-trees and a central fountain. A long, hollow-sounding passage, covered in with zinc roofing and boarded up at one side, ran all along by the high stone wall of this garden. A dim lantern lighted it. Whenever the *kanums* (ladies) passed through it, they went preceded by eunuchs carrying huge lanterns, and their slaves in waiting followed close behind. No one would have ventured to go alone by that dangerous way for fear of the lurking *affreets* and *shaitans*. The

halaiiks (under-slaves) always went through it two and two when sent on a message, except in the case of Gumuschleh Calpha; she had no friend, and must find her way alone.

One evening she had been kept late on duty, and about midnight was ordered to fetch some wraps from her mistress's room. This necessitated her going alone along the dreaded passage. She went without demur; but as she did not return within a reasonable time, other slaves were despatched to know what she was about. They found her in a swoon on the stone causeway. On coming to herself she declared that an *affreet* or *shaïtan* had suddenly come quite close to her, and had whispered fearful hissing words in her ear. Her terrors had so greatly excited her imagination that she fully believed this; and the story was accepted as fact when, on rising next day, the news spread through the household that the *calpha* had become stone deaf—to our amazement and her own utter confusion and distress.

Either the fright or the inability to hear so affected her speech that it became a mere mumbling, and was no longer intelligible, and the girl's efforts to express to us what had alarmed her became painful in the extreme. She essayed to speak, but uttered only in deep, unnatural tones half-formed syllables of words; and by signs only could she make us understand that something had assailed her unexpectedly.

As such deafness was a most serious defect, greatly impeding her usefulness, and depreciating her marketable value, her mistress tried every means of cure that was suggested. In the first place, fumigations of the house and every separate apartment were resorted to. In the next place, the girl herself was subjected to the healing influences of the wreathing incense-smoke whilst the censer was carried round her, and the sweet-scented white cloud wafted in her face and ears. Then the silver dish was placed on the ground, and her hands and arms were passed backwards and forwards in the fumes, and she was finally made to walk seven times across the sacred fire.

As this did not effect a cure, a *Khôdja* (a learned man) was called in to administer a text from the Koran. This he did by writing it on a slip of paper with gummy ink, afterwards washed off into water, which the girl was made to drink, the virtue of the holy words thus communicated to her being accounted an infallible charm.

But as neither remedy produced any change, a Dervish was brought to read over her certain portions of the Koran by way of exorcism. These were, doubtless, numberless repetitions of the two last chapters, both of which have attributed to them great preservative and curative efficacy.

This being likewise unavailing, the Munedj-djims, or Soothsayers, were consulted as to the cause of the seizure, as to the medicines to be tried, and charms to be exercised. The patient was taken to touch the relics of saints; amulets, consisting of texts written on parchment folded into little three-cornered packets and securely sewn up in canvas bags, were to be worn round the neck suspended to silken cords, like so many odd-looking eyeglasses.

At last it became advisable to try change of scene, for Gumuschleh Calpha had become painfully thin, pale, languid, and dejected. Her soft, hazel eyes turned beseechingly from one to the other of us, as though disclaiming any blame in the matter. I understood her look, since any sudden misfortune of the kind is frequently attributed by the Turks to the just and rapidly retributive anger of heaven for some disrespect shown to the Koran, or to *bread*, which is looked upon as holy (for which reason, if a piece is by chance let fall, it is instantly picked up, kissed respectfully, and carried to the forehead, as an acknowledgment that it is the sustenance of our earthly life). We tried to make the poor girl feel assured we had no such suspicion in her case, being careful not to appear to shrink from her touch; but, on the contrary, offering to hold her hand, or caressing her soft, fawn-coloured hair. At times she would stretch out her hands to us, in a way pitiable to behold, for help we could not give!

Whilst absent from us for change of air, she was, as I understood, watched over by the wives and daughters of a certain Mevlevih Dervish in their own hareem, and was the object of the special prayers of the holy man. After many weeks she was, not *cured*, but able to divine with surprising quickness, by a keen observation of the motions of our lips, the approximate meaning of what was said to her. Her speech, too, was much less inarticulate than at first, so that she could now make herself partially understood.

Was her mistress glad? I think not. The shafts of apprehensive jealousy had once winged their way to her heart, and were yet rankling there. Why then, do you ask, did she take such immense pains to have her cured? One need be well versed indeed in the reflex motives of the human heart to give the answer!

As to Gumuschleh Calpha, she had become changed in manner. She was now cold and cautious, but ever on the alert to please her mistress and give no cause for offence. If questioned about her illness, she would throw out her open palms in emphatic disclaimer, averring, over and over again, '*Bir shai bilemum!*' (I know nothing.) '*Wallieh! Hitch bir shai bilemum!*' (I know nothing at all.

'Wallieh,' pronounced with a strong emphasis upon the first syllable, seems to be equivalent to our asseveration 'Upon my honour!')

Yet, later on, the girl did take into her confidence one friend, whispering low, and looking round her cautiously as she did so. Was it altogether the *affreets*? They certainly had frightened her when going along the passage, and she had fainted, but she was not deaf *then*. That came afterwards. She had lain down in her bed, on the floor of the long, dim, curtained *sala* (or corridor), where she had to be on watch at the chamber-door of a little child that was in her charge. Towards dawn she was awakened suddenly by feeling some liquid dropped into her ear, and then came excruciating pain! Was it the *shaitan*? She had turned in time to see a figure making off with a small bottle in its grasp. But she could distinguish no sound, and was in agony and the extremest perplexity and distress. Ending, she sighed, and looked the suspicions she dared not breathe of having some secret enemy in the household.

The more superstitious among her companions probably connected her fright and its result with a 'haunted' room situated between the entrance to the dreaded garden passage and the *sala* in which she slept. It was dingy and dark, and used only as a *yemek odacisi*, or dining-room. No one, I believe, ever ventured to unroll her bed *there*. For there, it was said, in far-off days, an enraged miser had struck off the head of his Arab serving-woman as she was crouching ready to murder him whilst (as she thought) he slept, and preparing to carry off his treasures. The scene of the tragedy was said to become visible occasionally to those who had the gift of second sight. But these avowedly had been few, and I am not aware that any one in our generation claimed to have actually seen the ghosts—the face of an infuriated Turk, and the flying head of an Arab slave in shawl-turban!

After a while the haunted room itself passed out of mind, that part of the house in which it was situated being pulled down.

Gumuschleh Calpha, brought as a last resource to the notice of a European physician, was pronounced to be hopelessly deaf, the drum of the ear being destroyed:

The girl begged hard not to be sold; showed her willingness to be useful by an extraordinary readiness to anticipate the wishes of her mistress, by untiring vigilance in watching for orders, and extreme quickness in anticipating them. Docile and resigned as she had become, she made a most convenient *chibouquejee* to be in waiting to replenish pipes when visitors were calling on confidential business; so she was retained about the person of her mistress with a sort of contemptuous condescension.

What has been her ultimate 'fate' I do not know. One great crisis came to her in the death of her master and owner, and the removal of her mistress to a distant home. But what those changes have brought for her one cannot guess. Her life must probably be one long endurance of the whims of others—one long patience under her deep affliction. And her friends will have sighed over her, saying in a tenderly resigned tone, '*Eumrunu bitirmali! Kismet tekmi! olajak!*' and for her the unchangeable coming Future will have had to be endured, seeing they could no more undo the acted Past!

That the Turks believe in possession by evil spirits the following occurrence showed me.

One lovely moonlight night in summer, when the harem was located on the Asian bank of the Bosphorus, there was suddenly a great disturbance in the garden court, where the women of the household, who had been sauntering to and fro on the green sward, were all at once thrown into agitated wonderment. '*Né olmiş, adjiba!*' (What has happened, I wonder!) was heard on all sides. We soon learnt that one of the Calphas had had a 'seizure' (*too-toolmiş oldou*). She was in a little room opening on to the garden. Blue, cramped, rigid, and moaning, she lay, half unconscious, on the divan. It was Joâli, at her best a stout, fresh-coloured, hearty girl, often taunted, on account of her high cheek-bones, with being a *Moscov* (a Russian). She was a *hasnagee*, or wardrobe keeper; a quiet girl with plenty of good sense, in spite of a not very amiable temper. The *Bach Calpha* (Head Slave) wasted valuable time in ascertaining from the bystanders precise details of the attack. Meantime I ran for the *hakim*, but no doctor was to be found. Alarmed at the violent beating of the sick girl's heart, they did not dare to move her for some time, but at last the *Bach Calpha* decided on her being taken to a small upper room in a detached building. So, half carried, half dragged along the garden path, she was presently placed in a bed on the floor, and an old *Nina* (mother) set to watch her.

The silent, mysterious manner of these women convinced me that they believed this sudden attack to be a case of possession by evil spirits; that the girl was thought to have had what I must call a *moonstroke*. The evidence pointed to this conclusion. She had been walking in the court with her head uncovered, listening to the practice of the singing girls; the moonlight was bright and strong; presently she had gone into the class-room and had sat down amongst the other listeners, and then the fit had seized her.

My suggestion to try at once some simple remedy was strongly negatived; nothing could be done until a *Khodja* came. One was

found in about three-quarters of an hour. Everybody had been feverishly anxious for his coming, but as soon as he appeared all the women and girls ran out of sight excepting the watchers by the sick bed. I remained in the court, feeling no little surprise at the leisurely assurance with which the important personage entered. A small old man in a shabby, fur-lined, dark robe, worn over an under-dress (pink-striped cotton trousers and wadded jacket of the same material): on his head was the dark green turban marking him to be a descendant of the Prophet; and, as such, held in repute for extra sanctity. He walked with slow, solemn, weighty step, and before going to see the sick girl was led to the room where she was first 'seized,' to hear all that could be told of her employment, her character, her history, and other circumstances of the case. Then he slowly followed the path to the sick room, and as slowly mounted the little wooden staircase leading to it. The Khodja, seated on a low, flat cushion at the head of the bed, made a long recitation from the Koran, swaying his body violently backwards and forwards to the rhythm of a nasal drawl, the Nina, who had remained in the room, religiously imitating his action. The girl's face, during this time, was covered with a square of muslin as she lay flat in her bed; and the Nina had tied muslin over her head as if about to pray. The reading ended, a text was written and washed off in sherbet, which was next administered as a potion to the patient.

Then followed a curious part of the ceremony. Texts written in a bolder hand, with thicker ink on larger paper, were placed in a large metal *lay-en*, or basin. This was carried by the Khodja from the little class-room, the scene of the 'seizure,' which he first well sprinkled with water, as he afterwards did the path which led from it, taking care to follow the same direction as that in which the girl had been carried. The ceremony of exorcism then concluded with the *splashing* of the water over the paved path, the eunuch in attendance carefully lighting the priest, and pointing out those places where, in being removed, the patient had appeared heaviest, or had fallen down altogether. At these spots pauses were made, a special form of words appeared to be said over them, and the 'holy' water was thrown about copiously. Walking beside the two, I looked on in surprise at this curious proceeding, the Khodja not heeding my presence. From distant doorways and dark corners the women of the hareem were peeping out, but were unseen or ignored by the good man.

No objection was now made to my stationing myself in the sick room; and, as animation was not yet restored, by earnest entreaties I persuaded the women to try the effect of brisk and constant

friction. Towards [morning the girl was better, and in a few days quite recovered.

Her illness was evidently brought on by sunstroke, caught in going across the court at mid-day to the *tchamachirlic*, or laundry; but *moonstruck*, in the Turkish sense of the expression, Joâli was not, and she indignantly repudiated the supposition that hers was a case of possession by evil spirits.

But *affreets* are supposed not only to lurk in uncomfortable, unfurnished places; they are thought to consult their own convenience when they can. It is on this account that, when a bed is unrolled and prepared at night, a long flat pillow is invariably placed in it to simulate a sleeping occupant; for if this precaution were neglected, who can tell that the *affreets* might not hasten to 'possess' themselves of the tempting place of repose, before its human owner was disposed to lay himself down to rest?

The interpretation of dreams gives rise to much cogitation, and furnishes a frequent topic of conversation for Turks, men and women. Fire means sudden news, as water forecasts a journey. A person who has a reputation for explaining dreams finds a ready welcome everywhere in the East.

The Evil Eye is feared by all classes. It is to divert harmful admiration from her own beauty to her ornaments that a Turkish bride decks herself with diamonds pasted on chin, cheeks, and forehead: for this that she shrouds her face with a glittering veil of thin copper-coloured strips of tin-foil; for this that she sits under the *aski*, a festooned canopy of artificial green boughs, with bunches of dyed feathers and shining metal balls completing the decorations. It is for this that every Turkish baby has its little muslin skull-cap adorned with a medallion of pearls; and if you happen to say '*Né guzel tchoudjouk!*' (What a pretty child!), you are instantly asked to spit in its face, or to say '*Mash-Allah!*' to correct the mischief of your words.

'Wise' men and 'wise' women are had recourse to for discovering lost goods. These are known under the general name of *Munedj-djims*. I once had a good opportunity for observing their way of setting to work. The very day Prince Frederick William of Prussia was received at the Seraskierate (the Horse Guards in Stamboul) happened to be pay-day in the hareem, that is, the day the *ailik*, or monthly allowance, was paid over to each of the women. (It is little enough, and just suffices to buy clothing.) Several pedlar women, Greeks and Armenians, had come to receive accounts due, and were waiting in the long corridor outside the room of the *Khanum Effendi* (mistress of the house), who was seated in her own room, making reckonings, with the help of her

Kiatib (secretary), a young, intelligent-looking girl. The creditors were seated on their heels in a row along the wall, waiting their turn to be called up, when a eunuch bustled in with the news that the foreign Prince was passing a distant window. In a moment money and accounts were forgotten. The lady turned her small gold key, and took it away with her, leaving her green malachite money box on her divan. When she was tired of watching Prince Youssouff Izzeddin amble about on his long-tailed white palfrey, just one place in front of the tall, well-set hero of many battles—who rode a big charger, and looked a man of weight—when the glitter of the review was over, and she went back to the day's business, what was the consternation of everybody to find the box missing! Suspicion fastened on two very poor Turkish women who happened to have come with a message to an old Nina; and they were sent for, and found in their poor home by the Adrianople Gate. In spite of protestations, they were brought at once to the harem, to share the scrutiny that was to take place. Next day everyone's attention was again claimed by what was going on at the Seraskierate, where a Firman was being read to the assembled troops, creating the boy Prince a Pacha for his great service of the preceding day in receiving the German Prince. This caused much excitement, and was looked upon as a preliminary step to the proclamation that the Sultan's son would be heir to the throne in the place of Mourad Effendi (whose visit to the lands of the Ghiaours had not strengthened his hold over the minds of his future subjects).

And now the investigations concerning the theft commenced in earnest. The testimony of the eunuchs and *Capoudjou Baba* (Father Gate-keeper), as to who had passed out of the gates with or without bundles, was first taken. The mystery remaining impenetrable, it was determined to call in the Wise Man. All the slave girls were assembled in the Khanum's room, and a piece of hair was cut from the head of each, which hair was to be put to some use of magic that would ensure the discovery of the guilty person, as an eruption of boils from the sole of her feet to the crown of her head would sooner or later betray her wickedness.

The two suspected women—the one a poor miserable creature with a baby in her arms, the other her aged mother—had to share in this ordeal, and were to be detained till the charm had worked its effect. Their distress was great; this affliction seemed to crush them, and they moped, a picture of despair, in a little dark room set apart for them.

Four days after, as this test was considered to have failed, the slaves were again assembled, and a collection was made of nail-

parings to be sent to the diviner. Later in the day the *halaiks* were all again assembled in the presence of their mistress, and each one had solemnly to eat a morsel of bread on which her own name had been written, and to swallow a mouthful of sherbet in which had been steeped some written conjurations, or verses of the Koran. This ordeal was to cause the thief to drop down dead or have something as awful happen to her. I noticed that the girls went through the ceremony, some with a swagger of bravado, some with pale faces and trembling limbs. But what really had become of the money-box was never discovered, and no more serious effort to trace it was had recourse to than this application to the Munedj-djims. The eunuchs were very hot in pursuit, as it was their duty to be. Perhaps they considered extra zeal on their part especially graceful, since they, as confidential servants, had but lately been pardoned for appropriating to their own use some three hundred pounds of their mistress's money entrusted to them.

These fellows are passionately fond of backgammon and cards, and have their debts of honour to settle. Probably they considered themselves above suspicion. But, was it they who originated a whisper that a certain Khanum, a frequent visitor and great favourite of their mistress, had become touched with kleptomania? The idea, once started, gained ground, but was never openly expressed, and was perhaps confirmed when the poor lady, shortly after this, fell into a rapid decline. There were many sad circumstances to account for her illness, but it was perhaps chiefly due to the use of deleterious cosmetics. She had been divorced and had returned to her husband, who was a mere country boor, and extremely jealous withal. She died very shortly, kindly cared for by the Khanum, her friend.

Magic and witchcraft would seem to be practised to a very great extent amongst the Turks; there are those that are accounted Magicians, Witches, and Wizards, whose occult power is brought largely (but with much secrecy) to work out results on another's will, affections, property, and health.

Conceive the case of two rival wives each longing for the other's death. They look in each other's faces with jaundiced smiles, and revel together through a tournament of screeching music, and each knows all the while that the other has, so to speak, sold her soul to the Infernal Powers for the sake of present revenge. Let such a thing be but suspected by the one, and no power on earth can turn her from courting every spell of the Dark Craft to outdo her rival. For does not her very life depend on her resorting to more powerful means, to more subtle secrets, than the other knows of? Where can she find a man or woman 'wise' enough to lead her

through the labyrinth of dark ways that have to be trodden before she can arrive in triumph at her goal, and know her evil wishes realised? She sets to work cautiously and surreptitiously, binding some old woman to her secret service. But before spell, charm, or enchantment can be commenced, it is necessary to obtain possession of some object belonging to the person who has to be worked on. Say a divorce has to be brought about, two spoons must be obtained belonging to the parties who have to be separated; these metal objects are then securely bound together, in representation of the bonds of matrimony which unite their owners. The spoons are then either buried in the ground, or are hung in some damp, mouldy receptacle, incantations having been duly said over them. As the string binding them together gradually decays, so the bonds of affection between the husband and wife will surely give place to aversion and estrangement, till their two lives fall asunder.

In magic, *written* words are supposed to have mighty power, as though they could hold in a concentrated form the dearest and most hidden wish of the soul; and, if that wish is written with the heart's life-blood and in conjunction with the names of some of the holiest Prophets, its fulfilment is the more certain. Nearly every Khanum wears such an amulet: the religious-minded, as a preservation from sin; the superstitious, as a protection against *shaitans*; young girls, to ensure a happy marriage; the aged, to court long life; ambitious *effendis*, to ensure advancement; men who have two wives, to set themselves beyond the power of spells; and a beautiful woman to ward off envy. But in the case of a rival wife this amulet is a source of the keenest hope and of the gravest apprehensions. She must hide it from all eyes, and yet it must never leave her. Should it be discovered and tampered with, it would reveal her paramount object, the names of those concerned and the end to be effected being usually written inside the little three-cornered packet.

Although the greater number of Turks believe in these arts and practise them in secret, they would yet consider it a great disgrace to have such doings exposed to their nearest friend.

To my disappointment, I could hear nothing of genuine Eastern Astrologers—*Ehli Nudjoutler*. Mere fortune-tellers abound, especially 'card-openers,' as the expression is. Men and women of this doubtful profession haunt the hareems and salaamlis on pay-day, and grave-looking Pachas are as eager as are any of the credulous women slaves to look into the *kesmet* reserved for them. I am sorry to say it is not Turks only, or Greeks, Armenians, Jews, or Syrians, who are guilty of taking advantage of the richer Turk's belief in 'card-opening'; I have known Europeans gain permanent

influence and many rich presents by the same arts. But then the Turks only listen to those who predict for them a golden future, power, and plenty. A word of truth or warning makes them recoil from one, however kindly and faithfully the warning is given.

Divination is often made at holy wells by observing the surface of the water. At Eyoub, the sacred quarter of Stamboul, near the mosque where the Sultans are girt with the sword of Osman in lieu of coronation, is a famous well. It is to be found in the back garden of a poor, tumble-down house belonging to the Khodja who takes charge of it. It is an ordinary round well, about a yard in diameter. A low coping-stone runs round it, over which the votaries at Dame Fortune's shrine stoop low, to catch, if they may, some image in the depths below vouchsafed for their enlightenment. All Mussulmans, before looking in, reverently hide and stroke their faces with their open hands, as is their manner in praying for some favour. Full scope is there for the imagination to picture on the dark, deep, glimmering surface any face or form which may be uppermost in the mind of the agitated and superstitious gazer! The Khodja interprets, and all have their destiny foretold more or less to their satisfaction. A handsome, noble-looking woman was pointed out to me as having seen her 'fate' in this well whilst yet a slave, and long before she was sold into the family in which she found herself when the negotiations were set on foot for a marriage which made her a Princess. She herself had told the story as a fact. Other Khanums in middle-class life have boasted to me of having seen on the water the shadow of their future husbands. It was instructive to me to observe how far the Turkish women allowed themselves to be swayed in making important decisions by what they fancied they had seen during the well-test. One had perceived a figure girt with a sword, and therefore negatived every proposal of marriage until a soldier asked for her. Another had seen a dark, bearded face; so, in the public promenade, she was always looking for such an one; and the confidence between her and the fortune-teller was sure to bring the right person in the end, provided the lady had any dowry. I am afraid there are wives who, in consulting the well at Eyoub, have before them the possibility of a second, or even a third 'fate;' divorce being so easily obtained in Turkey,—it being, in fact, a mere matter of arrangement. It is in such a case that one can estimate something of the mischievous results of superstitions which tend to destroy what little semblance there is of home life in the East. No sort of parallel can be drawn between these Turkish beliefs and our own silly trials of fortune at Hallowe'en.

Necromancers—Seers and Seeresses who profess to commune

with the spirits of the dead—are to be found amongst the occult scientists of Stamboul. One of these was said to be an ecstatic medium of great power. She was but eighteen, and married, and had just recovered from a serious illness when I heard that some Khanums of my acquaintance were going to visit her. Attaching myself to them, we found the *Eülü Faldje Karé* in a lonely winding street of a poor neighbourhood of Stamboul. A crowd of all sorts of women, rich and poor, filled her little sanded ante-room. There were mothers with sick infants in their laps, come for a 'cure;' there were daintily dressed slaves from the Seraglio, wrapped up in shabby *feradjis*; there were married Khanums with the threat of divorce hanging over their heads. There they patiently awaited for hours their turn to be admitted to the inner room.

This was as poor as the other. The seeress, seated on a low stool in the midst of the uncarpeted floor, leant over a low brass mangal (or chafing-dish). She was a plump, fair young woman, with flaxen hair, and eyes of a peculiar light tint. She appeared to be excessively exhausted, and could not repress long and repeated yawns. She told us there were great demands on her powers, and that her strength was almost entirely gone at the end of the day. She would do her best for us, but in such a state of exhaustion her visions were uncertain. Then, placing us before her on low wicker stools, she bent over the brazier and sprinkled on the live charcoal a powder called *ambara*, the fumes of which presently affected her as one has seen mesmeric passes affect a mesmeric subject. Her eyes were raised, and had a fixed look, but she sat upright and answered intelligibly the questions which were put to her by ourselves or by the woman who acted as her second. I do not remember what she predicted for the others of our party, but for me she foretold a voyage over the sea, which was not a remarkably clever hit, since she must have known that I was a foreigner in Turkey intending some day to return to my own land. Still, I must do my fortune-teller the justice to acknowledge that I did make an unforeseen voyage to India not long after. But the *séance*, on the whole, was a failure; and as the effect of the *ambara* soon passed off, the seeress returned to her normal state, and begged us to leave her to repose, which, in pity to her weariness, we presently did.

A *medjidieh* (about four shillings) was looked on as a liberal gift from our party, some who had consulted having offered only a *beshlic* or two (a *beshlic* is about a shilling), and some had given only a few *paras* or pence. The woman seemed still quite poor, and evidently lived very miserably, saving most of her gains, and having to support a husband who had no calling. It was said that grief at the loss of her baby had made her a *clairvoyante*. She was

much sought after from the fear that her 'gift' would wear away as her sorrow healed. Hers was looked on as a case of genuine mediumship, and to see her I could not doubt that she believed in her mission and powers.

I must not conclude this paper without referring once again to the strong belief of the Turks in a fixed fate—the '*Kismet*' to which they know they must sooner or later bow. There exists amongst them a prophecy, the prediction of one of their Wise Men, that at a given time their old and bitter enemy, the '*Moscov*' (or Moscovite), will certainly triumph over Islam, and come and 'take away both their place and nation.' I have more than once heard them refer to this catastrophe as inevitable, and as being the most firmly believed in by the priestly class. One might suppose such a belief would paralyse every effort of so superstitious a people. Their hope seems to be that 'the' time has not as yet come; that the Crescent is but threatened at present with a partial eclipse; and that, if their cannon do but make noise enough, there is still a likelihood that the Monster Bear may be frightened off the moon!'

F. E. A.

' In allusion to the popular superstition that it is the presence of a clambering monster that darkens the moon in an eclipse, and to the practice of shouting and shooting from minarets just at the darkest moment, in hopes of making it gradually relax its hold and slink away.

legend, and, without resorting to fraud, try and rival the fame of his fellow townsman 'the wondrous boy with the fearless soul.'

In 1871 the legend was finished; in 1872 it had completed its round of the publishers, and lay on a shelf in Fairfax's lodgings with already a little accumulation of dust on its covers, and a deep accumulation of sorrows around its failure in his heart. The praise of it by the publishers was unanimous, their regrets that engagements did not at present admit of their undertaking its production, universal.

From the time that John Fairfax first entered the office of Messrs. Johnson and Royce, his politeness and amiability impressed them. As a result of these qualities, he was allotted the charge of all foreign business and of all dealings with poets—foreigners being proverbially polite, and requiring treatment after their kind; poets being historically irascible, and requiring tact, gentleness, and forbearance. In 1873 a firm of publishers, who did a large business, required the services of a man accustomed to poets, and John Fairfax got to understand that he had only to apply for the situation, and he would certainly get it. By this time his salary had been increased to three pounds a week; if he would undertake the poets of that publishing firm he could have four pounds ten. He was a strictly honourable man, and immediately put the case before his employers, adding that, although he should feel loath to leave a house with which he had been so long and so pleasantly connected, still he found himself, like other men, bound in justice to himself to try and improve his position; adding, as a crowning reason for this desire, that he had now another looking to him for a home, as, like many another man, he had asked her to share one with him as soon as he could provide it.

He was promised an answer the next day, and then informed that if he would stay he should have a share in the business there and then, that his name would be added to that of the firm, and that, as time went on, and circumstances seemed to warrant it, his share would be augmented. Thus it was that in the year 1873 Johnson and Royce issued a circular to their friends setting forth the alteration in the title, and giving at foot a specimen of signatures by the three members of the firm, his being the last.

All went pleasantly and prosperously with Messrs. Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax; and in 1877 the junior partner had not only a pleasant home but a pleasant smile as well to greet him when he returned in the evening from Catherine Street, and moreover, while he sat by his hearth, a tiny animate ornament for his knee; in the last he took a solemn shy pride which, when it displayed itself, brought tears, that never fell, into the bright eyes of his contented mate.

Although he had abandoned all thought of makin

Genius at the Hammer.

THE offices of the firm of Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax, auctioneers and valuers, were in Catherine Street, Strand. Until a few years ago the firm was known as Johnson and Royce, and celebrated all over the empire for the frequency and importance of its sales of interests connected with music and letters. Its books showed transactions for journals, weekly papers, monthly magazines, quarterly reviews, copyrights of music and of books, libraries, foreign rights, colonial rights, &c. In fact, the vast majority of those who wished to dispose of musical or literary property of any kind, always put down on the list for selection the names of Johnson and Royce, and a vast share of all such business fell into the hands of this firm.

It so happened that neither Mr. Johnson nor Mr. Royce had any particular knowledge of literature outside its purely business aspect, and this ignorance they often found to be a source of grave inconvenience, particularly in their foreign and colonial transactions.

In the year 1873 they had in their offices a clerk who five years before had come from Bristol with the intention of adopting literature as a profession. For eighteen months he suffered all the agonies of disappointment, hunger, and despair which fall to the lot of young literary men who rush up penniless and friendless to London, and throw themselves into the chill waters that surround the fabulous islands of literary fame. The name of this afflicted young man was John Fairfax; and in 1869 he gave up all thought of getting either fame or even bread by literature, and answered an advertisement of Messrs. Johnson and Royce. They wanted a clerk who wrote a good hand and knew German. He knew German and wrote a good hand, applied for the situation, and got it—with thirty-five shillings a week. He had been living on nothing a week for some time—a much more useful accomplishment for a poor man than poetry.

The night of the day he got the situation, he lay awake in a very gusty attic, building castles in the air and planning how he could live like a prince on thirty shillings a week, go to a theatre once a week for half-a-crown, and have the other half-crown to spend on books. He was a tall, thin young man, very placid, with blue eyes, light hair, a weird look about the eyes, and a low vitality. That night he decided to devote to poetry the evenings he did not visit a theatre. He would at once begin a monkish

legend, and, without resorting to fraud, try and rival the fame of his fellow townsman 'the wondrous boy with the fearless soul.'

In 1871 the legend was finished; in 1872 it had completed its round of the publishers, and lay on a shelf in Fairfax's lodgings with already a little accumulation of dust on its covers, and a deep accumulation of sorrows around its failure in his heart. The praise of it by the publishers was unanimous, their regrets that engagements did not at present admit of their undertaking its production, universal.

From the time that John Fairfax first entered the office of Messrs. Johnson and Royce, his politeness and amiability impressed them. As a result of these qualities, he was allotted the charge of all foreign business and of all dealings with poets—foreigners being proverbially polite, and requiring treatment after their kind; poets being historically irascible, and requiring tact, gentleness, and forbearance. In 1873 a firm of publishers, who did a large business, required the services of a man accustomed to poets, and John Fairfax got to understand that he had only to apply for the situation, and he would certainly get it. By this time his salary had been increased to three pounds a week; if he would undertake the poets of that publishing firm he could have four pounds ten. He was a strictly honourable man, and immediately put the case before his employers, adding that, although he should feel loath to leave a house with which he had been so long and so pleasantly connected, still he found himself, like other men, bound in justice to himself to try and improve his position; adding, as a crowning reason for this desire, that he had now another looking to him for a home, as, like many another man, he had asked her to share one with him as soon as he could provide it.

He was promised an answer the next day, and then informed that if he would stay he should have a share in the business there and then, that his name would be added to that of the firm, and that, as time went on, and circumstances seemed to warrant it, his share would be augmented. Thus it was that in the year 1873 Johnson and Royce issued a circular to their friends setting forth the alteration in the title, and giving at foot a specimen of signatures by the three members of the firm, his being the last.

All went pleasantly and prosperously with Messrs. Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax; and in 1877 the junior partner had not only a pleasant home but a pleasant smile as well to greet him when he returned in the evening from Catherine Street, and moreover, while he sat by his hearth, a tiny animate ornament for his knee; in the last he took a solemn shy pride which, when it displayed itself, brought tears, that never fell, into the bright eyes of his contented mate.

Although he had abandoned all thought of making any fresh

attempt upon literature, notwithstanding the fact that the manuscript had been dusted and read into the astonished ears of his admiring wife, who valiantly incited him to new enterprise in the flowery field, still when his heart was most elated he always thought of himself as one of the Republic of Letters, and never failed to do what deeds of kindly service he could for poets who came his way in business. He had had for a long time in his head a scheme for the benefit of unpublished authors; and on October 22, 1877, he laid this scheme before his partners. In brief, this was his explanation of it to them:—

In London and the provinces there are vast stores of excellent literature which never has touched a printer's case, and, under present circumstances, never will. The reasons why this is so are several. Firstly, many of the manuscripts have already been submitted to publishers, and, owing to the authors making selections of unsuitable firms, the manuscripts have been returned, the writers disheartened, and the piles of closely-written foolscap put by in despair; secondly, authors having heard from literary friends in London that it is almost impossible to get any publisher who will look at the manuscript of an unknown writer, the manuscripts have never left the possession of the authors, and are never likely to be forwarded to any publisher; and thirdly, because many writers are too timid to risk failure. Of course the vast majority of unpublished writing is rubbish; but then, out of the bushel of chaff, it is desirable to winnow the one grain of wheat, if the winnowing can be done inexpensively and with no risk to anyone concerned.

So far John Fairfax's partners thought there was some sense in his words, but expressed some doubts as to the existence of the one grain of wheat. Then they said, 'Well, suppose for argument sake the one grain of wheat did exist; what then?'

Although this was not very encouraging for Fairfax, he was not to be lightly disheartened in trying to carry out a scheme which had been before his mind day and night for a long time. So he proceeded to disclose his plan.

'My idea is this. Let us insert advertisements in the literary and daily papers saying that on a certain day in January next we will put up by auction all manuscripts sent to us on or before November 15 in this year.'

'But who would dream of buying?'

'Stop a bit. On November 12 we issue a circular to the publishing trade, setting forth that a large sale of original manuscripts will be held by us at some place in the Strand or Fleet Street, and that from the fifteenth of that month until the day to be fixed in

January, publishers are invited to send readers, who may thus inspect the properties offered. What do you think of this ?

As John Fairfax disclosed his novel conception the eyes of Johnson and Royce gradually left his face and sought each other's. When he had concluded, they said they would like to talk the matter over between themselves before coming to any conclusion. So the scheme was put aside until the next day.

As soon as the three were again come together Mr. Johnson, being spokesman, began :—

‘ Things are very brisk in the auctioneering line now, Fairfax. Business is so bad all round outside that people are getting tired of what they have, and fancying that what they haven't must be better than what they have, and are selling out and going into new things. Now, it occurs to Royce and myself that there is plenty of room for new enterprise, and that you have discovered a field which, if properly worked, would yield a fortune. Royce and myself are old men, not fit to go into a new idea. What we propose is that you take a fair price for your interest in Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax, go out of the firm, start on your own account, and in this new line, binding yourself, of course, not to engage in business at all interfering with the business of this firm as now carried on. Suppose we set the lawyers to work at once, and draw you a cheque for six thousand five hundred pounds in consideration of your share in Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax : what do you think of that ? ’

John Fairfax was staggered. The thought of starting in business for himself and of opening his individual venture with his pet scheme was fascinating. But, added to all this, a fine capital of six thousand five hundred pounds—fully two thousand five hundred more than his own estimate of the value of his share—fairly dazzled him. He thought, however, that it would be just as well to consult his bright-spirited, bright-eyed little wife before finally deciding. So he, too, asked for twenty-four hours for consideration, and got the time with gracious smiles and gratifying pressures of his senior partners' hands.

With kisses of love and tears of pride Mrs. Fairfax heard the tale her husband had to tell that evening. When it was finished she took their sleeping baby out of its little rose-curtained cot and placed it in her husband's arms, that the strong joy of the man in a father's heart might penetrate the form of the sleeping child and hang the chambers of its dreams with glorious tapestries ; for the thoughts of the little one, like those of Egypt in the childhood of the world, were written in pictures of things, and not in symbols for spoken words.

Next day the partners arranged all the details, and in a week the partnership was dissolved. John Fairfax lodged his cheque for six thousand five hundred pounds, opening an account in his own name, took an office for himself, and the firm of Johnson, Royce, and Fairfax shrank back to its old limits within Johnson and Royce.

‘What a relief!’ said Mr. Johnson to Mr. Royce, when all was signed and they sat alone.

‘He would have ruined us utterly if he had remained with us,’ said Mr. Royce, with a sigh of relief.

‘But, my dear Royce, I did not dare to tell you the worst while there was any possible chance of his not going out. Now I may. Why, I heard, only three days ago, that he has a poem of his own.’

‘A poem of his own! The devil he has!’ cried Mr. Royce, in a tone of amazed stupefaction. ‘I never dreamed of such a thing. What an escape we have had!’

‘Most merciful! A poem of his own!’

The two partners looked cautiously and suspiciously round the office as though they dreaded to see a poem or a snake.

‘You’ll lunch with me to-day, Royce?’

‘No; you with me, Johnson.’

‘No; I told you about the poem, and I owe you a bottle to set you right after the shock.’

‘Very well; only let us have some brandy first. I feel all unstrung—a poem!’

That very day, in his new office, Wine Office Court, with the aid of his newly-engaged clerk, John Fairfax drew up and sent out the advertisements for the papers. The sale was announced for Wednesday, January 9, 1878, at 2 p.m., and to take place in the folding-room of Messrs. M’Kenzie, Sturt, and Doyle, bookbinders, No. 7 Winchester Court, Fleet Street. M’Kenzie, Sturt, and Doyle were friends of John Fairfax, and promised to lend him the room for the evening. In the advertisements it was stated that only works of the imagination would be received.

When Fairfax first determined upon carrying out his pet scheme, he resolved to look through any manuscripts that might be sent in; but the advertisements had been only three days before the public when he had to give up all thought of carrying out that part of his design, the consignments of manuscripts grew to such vast dimensions.

Authors living within the district of London were the first to respond. Almost without exception they brought the manuscripts themselves. They came bespattered with mud, they came in

broughams, they came in hansom cabs; they carried the parcels themselves, they had them carried by their private Boswells, they had them carried by footmen. However they came, or by whomsoever the parcels were carried, one and all of the authors wanted to see Mr. Fairfax personally to explain something to him about the stories or the poems; and in all cases where a personal interview took place between auctioneer and client, the explanation invariably ended in the author untying the string and pleading to be allowed to read just a few lines from a favourite passage. But here the auctioneer, polite and indulgent and gentle-mannered though he was, interposed and declared that such a thing was against the rule he had laid down, and that he could make no exception. Upon this the author left, seeming to nourish a deadly hatred of the auctioneer.

After the town came the country. What an insight into the unknown regions of Great Britain and Ireland John Fairfax got from his experiment! Not a single county was unrepresented from Orkney to Cornwall, from Suffolk to Sligo. From cities and towns and villages and hamlets and 'Houses' and 'Castles' and 'Cliffs' and 'Lakes' and 'Meres' and 'Tarns' and 'Chaces' and 'Granges' and 'Ponds' and 'Rocks' and 'Weirs' and 'Thorpes' and 'Holds' and 'Wolds' and 'Meadows' and 'Woods' and 'Hills' and 'Fords' and 'Glens' and 'Brooks' and 'Sides' and 'Manors' and 'Vicarages' and 'Abbeys' and 'Towers' and 'Forts' and 'Waters,' and every other conceivable house that was the House of the neighbourhood, poured the vast confluent streams of literature.

The Post-office authorities gave notice to the police, and the police took action, and some of the manuscript was examined. A novel against intemperance from Ayr, a poem on the Siege of Limerick from Nenagh, three hundred Sonnets from Amlwch, and an Epic from Southwold were examined; and having been found not to be connected with turf frauds or a Russian conspiracy for the invasion of England, the parcels were permitted to reach their destination.

But the matter came to the ears of the Postmaster-General, and he mentioned it to the literary Premier, and the Premier made it his business to stroll down Fleet Street and look at the wonderful sight of a special Post-office van arriving about every hour at John Fairfax's office with manuscripts to be offered at a sale, the first of its kind, where unknown genius would have at least one chance of being looked upon by a number of keen-scented publishers. As the literary Premier stood leaning on the arm of his private secretary, he sighed to himself and whispered softly into

the ear of his familiar, 'In my "Alroy" days that sight would have aroused all the enthusiasm of my nature; now—well, if comparisons are odious, contrasts are infamous. Did you hear if the leader of the late Government had sent anything?'

'No, Earl; I did not hear.'

'Earl! "Alroy!" Seventeen and seventy! Wordsworth got hold of one part of the truth; the boy *is* father to the man; but what is the old man to the boy?—An indulgent grandfather. Corry, satisfy a whim of mine. Let us make a party of three, you, the Earl, and that boy of fifty years ago (how he would have enjoyed the company!), and take him to the theatre where there is the most splendid pageant of colour, the most intoxicating revel of music. Let us take frugal seats in the pit.'

'But they will not see the boy, and they will see the Earl-Premier, and the people will stand up and shout for the Earl-Premier, and the band will play the Turkish anthem.'

'Confound the Earl and the Turks, sir! Can I not go to the play with my father and my grandson?'

'Yes, Earl, if you please; but for reasons connected with public affairs your private secretary cannot accompany you. The thing is not to be dreamed of out of Bedlam.'

'I suppose it can't be. But, Corry, let's go to Bedlam; I want one dream more.'

'Your lordship cannot to-night. You forget the House is not sitting.'

'True, Corry; true. Well, I surrender. Whose carriage is that? A marquis's coronet! A marquis! 'Twould never do to go to a pit, Corry. What nonsense I have been talking! A marquis! The boy lived his time, and did not compromise his future, and is no more. The Earl is, and must live his time in the present—in the present, and not compromise. A marquis! I wonder who it was?'

And, so saying, the two passed out of Fleet Street towards Westminster, as many others have gone before.

If the places from which manuscripts poured in upon John Fairfax were wide apart and universally representative, the ways in which the parcels were made up displayed almost as striking a variety. In a glove box, tied up with berlin wool, a romance of true love; in a wrapper of brief-paper, fastened with a parchment binder and sealed with a vice-consular seal, a tragedy of the sea; in a pasteboard box, smelling of scented soap, the history of a virtuous governess's trials; in a wrapper, bearing the brand of the Inland Revenue Office, a collection of lyrics; in a portion of an insurance map, a prayer in verse for more light; in a music

case, the moving history of a woman's broken heart; in a ship's brass register case, a description in prose of the Garden of the Hesperides; in a gold-beater's skin, a satire on prison fare; stitched into a cover of Bunyan's '*Pilgrim's Progress*,' a novelette after the manner of Ouida; in rose-coloured tissue paper, the history of a great sin; in brown paper, and tied with wick-yarn, the history of a great crime; smelling of violets, the tale of a Black-Country murder; smelling of cheese and paraffine, a legend of the East; a rose-water-perfumed narrative, in the manner of Poe, of the dissecting room; in a woman's writing, the history of a hero ruined by the Abominable; in a man's, a plea for a fallen sister;—and with each and all a request that each particular manuscript be specially brought under the notice of the publishers; from nine-tenths of all an intimation that more of the same kind could be forwarded; by half Mr. Fairfax's attention was called to the address at head of the letter, at which place a remittance would reach the sender; and from one-fifth a request for some money on account.

As the days went on, it became quite clear to John Fairfax that the folding-room in Winchester Court, Fleet Street, would not only be utterly inadequate to the requirements of the sale, but would not hold, packed from floor to ceiling, one-half of the bundles. At first, when the torrents of genius were loosed upon him, he felt staggered and confounded. But his brave wife saw in the enormous response to his call only the enormous success of his idea; in the end he came to adopt her view of the case, and lived in a fever of proud anticipation.

He had started modestly with one clerk; now ten staggered under the prodigious burden of correspondence and indexing. He advertised for a large ground floor, and secured one in Thames Street—the ground floor of a vast wharf, then undergoing partial rebuilding, and of no use for its old purposes as yet. After that he had to add ten more men to his staff for arranging, classifying, and getting the papers into order. He had to employ a night watchman to guard the manuscripts from thieves, and four powerful black cats to protect them from rats. Some of the papers being excessively greasy, the four cats had afterwards to be increased to eight. All this cost him a large sum of money; but he had gone into the speculation, and the only way out of it was to spare no expense, and make the thing a great success.

He now found that all would be useless without a printed catalogue. So the catalogue was made out, so far as it could be, a month before the sale, and a copy sent, not only to every publishing firm in the kingdom, but to every firm in the United States

and Canada as well. All manuscripts arriving after it was made went into a supplementary catalogue, and this was forwarded to all publishers in the kingdom.

The catalogues were got up with the greatest taste, and, added together, extended to seven hundred and fifty pages. They were printed in blue, black, and red—the name of the work in blue, the description of it in black, and the author's name in red—most handsome volumes, half-bound in calf, with gold edges and gold letters on the back. The estimate for the catalogues was four hundred and fifty pounds, which with extras, alterations, proofs, &c., grew to six hundred and thirty when the bills appeared. 'It had to be all worked at press and by the best men money could buy, owing to the importance of securing accurate register;' so the printer explained, being a printer.

When John Fairfax put down the first volume before his wife, she fairly screamed for delight. She showed the baby the miracle. He, poor little thing, happening to be suffering from teething, dribbled on the splendid title-page and ruined it.

'Never mind,' said John; 'there are other copies.'

'If it were only your poem,' said his wife, kissing the child; as though she said, 'Papa isn't angry with the dilly-dux.'

He spread the volume wide, and pointed with a mild humility to a line, saying, 'You see, dear, I am taking my chance for it with the rest:—

"THE LEGEND OF ST. ANDREW'S: *A poem dealing with the love of a yeoman for an Earl's daughter. Time—The Dark Ages.* By JOHN FAIRFAX."

'It looks lovely, John, and you're sure to sell it for a good price,' said the wife. With a sudden impulse she stooped and kissed where his name appeared in red; when she rose, he kissed where his heart appeared in red—at her lips. The kissing of the book looked like a passage in a rite of the Latin Church; the kissing of her lips, a sacrament of God's love among men.

Time slipped away, and a good deal of John Fairfax's six thousand five hundred pounds; and on the first day named for the coming of the publishers' readers he was more than two thousand pounds out of pocket. No fewer than sixty thousand lots were set forth in the catalogue. 'Well,' thought John Fairfax, 'they can't average less than one pound a lot, and if they did only average fifteen shillings all round, that would be forty-five thousand pounds—more than enough to clear me at five per cent.; and surely, considering the number of fine epics and novels and romances and pastorals and narratives and tales of adventure, they can't go so low as fifteen shillings.'

John Fairfax received the readers in his most gracious manner. He inquired what department they desired to see, and conducted them to the sections himself. In the centre of the gloomy vault-like chamber stood the reading table, and upon the reading table pleasant shaded lamps, and pleasanter cold juicy joints, and mellow meat-pies, and luscious fruit, and bland jellies, and all manner of comforting and cheering liquors. This reading was only an inspection, not an auction; John Fairfax knew his business better than to treat at a sale.

The attendance of readers was thin the first day; but the second it increased, and the third, and the fourth, and the fifth, until John Fairfax was almost beside himself with joy and triumph. As the time for the sale approached, it seemed to John Fairfax that not only the publishers' readers, but the publishers themselves and all their clerks dropped in one time or another during the day, seized a manuscript, mastered some particular story or poem in a few minutes, partook of some refreshment, and left. Now and then some kindly soul would whisper in his ear, 'I booked that "Lady Jugurtha's Massacre" for my people, old man. Your health.' John Fairfax kept an account of all such speeches in a book, of course omitting the ultimate and penultimate words. On the morning of the sale he had booked promises for twenty-seven thousand lots. 'After which,' he cried triumphantly, 'there are all my chances, and the things they haven't told me of.'

But his cup of happiness was not full until, getting to his office, he found the following among other letters:—

Offices of the 'Daily Telephone,'
Fleet Street, London, E.C.

January 8, 1878.

Dear Sir,—I have looked over the lots you tender for sale to-day, and am prepared to offer for the lot if you are disposed to treat.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WYBROW ELDRED.

Mr. John Fairfax, Auctioneer,
Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

The 'Telephone' offering to buy up the lot! It never rains but it pours! He had heard that, owing to a long-standing threat of an American rival, the 'Telephone' had determined to open new ground in English journalism, and this must be the novelty. But then he suddenly recollected all the promises he had from other people, and he was reluctantly obliged to send a note saying that some of the lots had been bespoken, and were as good as sold; but he sincerely hoped Mr. Eldred would attend the sale, as many of the most interesting lots had not been as much as mentioned.

The sale room, Thames Street, 2 p.m.

The centre table with all its bright glasses and cutlery, its succulent viands and its generous wines, had been cleared away, and the position occupied by it filled with benches for the accommodation of those who should attend. At the end of the dim store most remote from the entrance stood the auctioneer's rostrum with two large lamps upon it.

With head erect and a slight flush of triumph in his cheek, John Fairfax stepped down the passage in the centre between the two rows of benches, looking from right to left with eyes flashing a little now and then, as he noticed that every available place was occupied.

What a representative assembly! he thought. Here were young girls, unmistakably from the West End, and rough-looking patriarchs from Whitechapel; here was a boy of twenty in an undress military suit; and here, no doubt, a costermonger poet of fifty. This matron was the author of a novel of society; this pale widow, the poetess of a sorrow; here was an awkward country lad, author of something about blackbirds and the chase, and winding a hunter's silver horn; here an Indian veteran with, maybe, tales of tiger-shooting in the jungle; that careworn man, obviously a bookseller's or newspaper hack, had sent odes to Psyche; here frowned the unacted tragedian; there lounged uneasily the nervous sonneteer; the gloomy-looking man with the long black beard must be the writer of something about sorcery or the Black Forest; and by his side was a lyrist nodding his head to 'ditties of no tone.' As well as John Fairfax could judge, all these on the outer ends of the benches were authors. So much the better; the publishers had come early, and were pushed up close to the wall. This coming early of the publishers was the final and crowning trophy in his triumph, and he felt giddy with joy.

As he reached the last bench he saw a low-sized dark man in a dark tweed suit sitting at the end of the bench on his right; beside him a tall, light-haired man in a light tweed suit. 'Well,' thought Fairfax, 'all the representatives of the publishers have not been pushed to the wall; here are two.'

He ascended the rostrum with a slightly tremulous step. He was within the magic garden, and was about to stretch forth his hands and pluck the jewel fruits of his hopes. A little shadow came upon his face, paused a moment, and passed away, leaving him radiant and smiling. Into his mind had flashed a transitory regret that his bright-eyed, hopeful little wife was not present to taste the pleasures of his success in its dewy freshness. In a second the thought was gone. It would be all the pleasanter to tell her

the story of the day as they sat at night before the cheerful fire, her head upon his shoulder, his arm round her waist, their baby asleep in the blue-eyed mother's lap.

'Ladies and gentlemen, it is not my place to make a speech to you. You all know the business we are here to transact to-day; it has attained, I may say, a world-wide notoriety. It will be sufficient if with a meeting of such exceptional intelligence I confine myself strictly to business. I shall therefore satisfy myself with merely reading for you the conditions of this sale.'

He had intended making a speech; but his throat was dry and hard, and his mind so confused that he could not recollect even the heads of the address he had prepared.

'The conditions are these: i. There is no reserve; ii. I will sell all manuscripts for which there is even one bid; iii. Purchasers are to pay a deposit of ten per cent. on the evening they buy, and the balance before removal; iv. All manuscripts bought to be taken away within two clear days of the day of sale; v. A commission of five per cent. to be paid by purchasers; vi. The sale to be continued from day to day until all is disposed of.' These were followed by a few of the matter-of-course rules of all auctions. When he had finished reading, there was a low murmur of voices, a shuffle of feet, followed by a dead silence, such as takes place in a court of justice when the jury come in with their verdict in a case of murder.

An attendant handed John Fairfax a parcel of manuscript, about as large as an average six-shilling novel, calling out at the same time in a sonorous voice:—

'“Aaron Ray,” a poem, by Tenby Rosscover.'

So profound a silence followed the attendant's voice that a leaf beating against one of the low windows caused all heads to turn towards that side of the store-room.

'“Aaron Ray,” a poem, by Tenby Rosscover,' repeated John Fairfax a little huskily, taking the parcel and holding it aloft in the light of the two lamps.

Silence again; but that was only befitting the great importance of the occasion. All the representatives of the publishers present felt the responsibility of starting so vast a game, and held back.

'How much for “Aaron Ray”?' Let some one speak. Four hundred pages of a poem, ladies and gentlemen, and about fifty lines to the page; in all, say, two thousand lines. Moore got as many guineas, ladies and gentlemen, for a poem of equal length. Will some one say twenty pounds, just to set us going? Some one give me a bid. Start me with a nominal sum. Come, let us say something.'

‘May I?’ asked the man in the dark tweed suit at the end of the bench, stretching out his hand.

‘Certainly,’ replied Fairfax, with a smile, as he motioned the attendant to pass the poem to the speaker. He added, ‘I am afraid, sir, you will not be able to form any very accurate estimate of its merit in the time we can give to it.’

‘Oh, yes, I shall.’ He took it, held it in his hand for a moment, returned it to the attendant, and whispered ‘Twenty-four’ to the man beside him.

‘Twopence!’ cried aloud the man in the light tweed suit. ‘I’ll give twopence for “Aaron Ray.”’

‘Two pence!’ echoed Fairfax in amazement. For a moment he seemed half displeased, half discomfited; presently a bright look dawned in his eyes. It was a little pleasantry on the part of the man in the grey tweed suit. One of the soundest of auctioneering maxims is, Always honour the joke of a bidder when presented; so John Fairfax laughed softly a sickly stage laugh, and, facing the assembly, called out:—

‘Thank you, sir. Any advance after twopence for “Aaron Ray,” poem, by Tenby Rosscover?’

He waited for a laugh, but no laugh came. He waited for an advance, but no advance came. He used all the eloquence of his art, all the encouraging pleas he could bring forward, and after ten minutes ‘Aaron Ray,’ a poem, by Tenby Rosscover, was knocked down for twopence.

‘What name, sir, please?’ demanded the clerk.

‘John Wybrow Eldred.’

Fairfax started. The great man from the ‘Daily Telephone!’ But one would think that the great man from the ‘Daily Telephone’ must be above such a jest as offering twopence for a poem of two thousand lines. What was this Eldred on the ‘Telephone?’ Fairfax did not know; but any man connected with a daily paper, and in such a position as to be able to propose buying such a stock of manuscripts as he had for sale, must be a man of importance. ‘Next lot,’ he called out to the attendant. Fairfax tried to penetrate the gloomy ends of the benches where the representatives of the publishers sat, but failed to do so, the light was so bad.

“‘Aboard the Skylight,” a nautical romance, by John William Fenton.’

‘Now, then,’ cried John Fairfax in perplexity, yet with an assumption of jocularly as though he thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Eldred’s humour.

Another inexplicable silence among the general body, after a while again the same outstretched hand, and the same question

followed by the words 'a hundred and six' whispered into Mr. Eldred's ear.

This was a much larger and more greasy looking-parcel; it looked as though it had been steeped awhile in lamp-oil and then dredged over with small coal.

'Ninepence halfpenny,' from the last buyer.

'Thank you. Ha, ha, ha! A most original bid. Quite unique. Well; I said I wouldn't refuse any bid, and I won't even halfpenny bids; though they are new to me, ladies and gentlemen.'

'Put up the whole lot, and you'll get on better,' suggested the representative of the 'Telephone.'

'Not yet.' With a cordial smile. 'Now, what spirited speculator will make the money even? Who'll say a shilling for "Abaft the Skylight," this exciting tale of the sea?'

Not a sound.

'Going, going, gone.'

John Fairfax wondered if he were sleeping or waking. Had the anxiety of the few months last passed followed him into his dreams, and was this hideous nightmare the Nemesis of overwork?

The man handed him a parcel much smaller than the last, yet larger than the first, reading aloud "'Abbastanza!" the story of a broken heart, by Lady Georgina Louisa Grace.'

'What for "Aberration?"' demanded the auctioneer in a dreamy voice. Would no one wake him up? Would no one hear his moans?

'"'Abbastanza!"' The man corrected him, and handed the manuscript to the same outstretched hand.

'"'Abbastanza!"' muttered Fairfax, correcting himself. 'How much now shall we say for "Abbastanza!" to begin with? Won't some one make me a bid?'

'Thirty-three,' whispered the man in the dark suit to the man in the light suit.

'Fourpence halfpenny,' said the latter aloud.

'Thank you, sir,' said Fairfax, with a laugh. To his own mind he had now cleared up the difficulty; the evil genius of his fate was exercising power over him in his sleep and burlesquing his great scheme. He would humour the joke and enter into it.

'Fourpence halfpenny for "Abbastanza," the story of a broken heart, by Lady Georgina Louisa Grace. Any advance on four and a half? and at four and a half it's—gone.'

His wife could never enjoy this kind of joke, and it was well she was not present. But if those people before him, and the sale he was conducting, and his own personality in the situation were *all the creations of a waking intellect in a sleeping body, it would*

be all the same whether he could see his wife there or not. No, it would not; because he knew she would look pained and disappointed, and that would spoil this dream-joke of his.

'Put up the whole lot and save time,' again urged Mr. Eldred.

He shook his head and smiled; it was too soon to put an end to such a splendid joke.

"'L'Abime," an epic of Tartarus, by Noel Wentworth Lea. What shall we say for this noble epic of ten thousand lines? Who will bid, just to start me, as little as Milton got for "Paradise Lost"?"

The man with Mr. Eldred of the 'Telephone' received the manuscript and said, 'A hundred and thirty' into the ear of the other.

'Twelvepence,' called out Mr. Eldred; and at a shilling it was knocked down.

'"Abreast the Dawn," lyrics, by Adrian Charles Casswell.'

'Eight,' whispered the man in the light suit.

'One halfpenny.'

'Gone.'

"'Æpytus," a tragedy, by Vincent Alexander Tayford.'

'Four.'

No bid.

"'Æpytus," a tragedy, by Vincent Alexander Tayford. Won't some one put up this fine tragedy, full of the antique spirit combined with the modern introspective subtlety? Will not some one start me?"

'Put up the whole lot,' said Mr. Eldred.

'Will not some lady or gentleman favour me with a bid for this most thrilling tragedy?"

'Put up the lot.'

John Fairfax's face had gradually grown redder and redder as time went on. His eyes gained momentarily in brightness. Around the lights danced a changing iris that dilated; and now there was a strange booming and twanging in his head, as though his ear were pressed against a telegraph pole; and to the searching murmur of the wires was added now and then a blow that shocked. Would it not be better to put the whole lot up and be done with this dream, and wake, and get up, and pour cold water on his head? Cold water would be so delicious! Oh! what a bang the wires got then! Better put an end to this, anyway.

'Well, who will make me a bid for the lot?"

'Sixty thousand,' whispered the man in the dark suit to Mr. Eldred, 'averaged at twenty-four, is one million four hundred and forty thousand, divided by sixteen is——'

‘Any bid for the whole lot?’ How his temples throbbed!

‘Ninety thousand; that, divided by one hundred and twelve, gives eight hundred and three.’

‘Any bid——?’

‘Five hundred and sixty pounds.’

‘Five hundred and sixty pounds! Five hundred and sixty pounds for the whole lot!’ Was his head going to burst? End this! end this! ‘And, there being no advance on that, it’s Gone!’

As the hammer came down, John Fairfax threw up his head hurriedly, glared round, then bent forward, and bowed down slowly until he lay on the rostrum, his flushed face hanging over the outer edge, his white hands hanging powerlessly down, making startling patches against the dark green front of the rostrum. A few people stood up and looked curiously at him. His body was convulsed for a moment; then with a loud crash the rostrum fell to the ground, flinging the extinguished lamps among the people, and leaving John Fairfax lying on his face, with back quivering and stertorous breathing, in the passage between the two sets of benches.

They raised him up, and carried him to the door for air, and sent for a doctor. ‘A fit,’ the doctor said, ‘but not a severe one. He’ll be all right in a few days;’ and went home with him in a cab.

The same evening John Fairfax became conscious; and the doctors said that, considering the circumstances which produced the attack, and its comparative mildness, they did not think he would suffer any permanent injury from it. They recommended quiet for a day or two, and succeeded in setting at rest the fears of Fairfax’s wife.

Two days later he was well enough to see his chief clerk, and learn detail of events. The clerk told him that the gentleman from the ‘Daily Telephone’ had behaved in a most kind and considerate manner, and sent word to Mr. Fairfax that no one could have done better with the manuscripts. His bid had been equal to the full market value—fourteen shillings a hundred-weight; and no author, howsoever timid, need have any fear of his manuscript getting into wrong hands, or being exposed to prying eyes, as all would be despatched straight to the paper-mill of the ‘Telephone,’ and ground up without delay.

‘How much worse it might have been, John darling!’ said his wife when the clerk was gone. ‘You have still enough money to start a safer kind of business.’

‘And, Mary,—he never felt her Christian name so sweet as in his troubles now,—‘I have you and the little one, and what business can be anything but good when I feel that I am working for you?’

RICHARD DOWLING.

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

V. VITTORIA COLONNA.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

MARINO is a little ancient gloomy walled city lying among the Alban hills, less than twenty miles from Rome. It is situated between Grotta Ferrata and Castel Gandolfo, and somewhat below the crater of a dead volcano, which holds the Lake of Albano. Probably there is not elsewhere on earth a spot so near to a great capital city—unless there be some such near to Athens, and if Athens may rightly be designated a ‘great’ capital in aught save memories!—where lawless barbarism and uncultured ignorance reigned undisturbed so long and late as in Marino. Latium, indeed, is to this day a ‘land of hiding’ in one sense. Immemorial customs, hereditary, hungry poverty, pagan superstitions, and blind ignorance that cannot even conceive there is a world beyond that which it can touch with horny groping fingers—all these still hide in many nooks and crannies of the Latin land; where, as bats and owls shun the light of day, they cower away from the spreading rays of intelligence and education. Very picturesque, when the curious traveller imbued with classic poetry and classic story comes on them in their haunts. Poverty, paganism, and superstition are apt to be valuable elements in the picturesque!

In this little walled town, at that time an important fief of the princely and powerful family of the Colonnas, was born, some time in the year 1490, a female infant—the first-born of her young mother, who was but eighteen years old. The exact month and day appear not to be ascertained; but it is sufficiently well established that Vittoria was born in the year 1490. Her father was Fabrizio Colonna, Grand Constable of the Kingdom of Naples; her mother, Agnese di Montefeltro, was daughter to Federigo, Duke of Urbino. On both sides, therefore, her lineage was most illustrious. Her birth took place at a rare period of peace, during a temporary lull in the storm of faction, rapine, and civil war which devastated the States of the Church, and all other states in Italy—during that fruitful, fateful period known among Italians as the ‘Quattro cento,’ and to us as the fifteenth century.

The high nobility of the little Vittoria’s lineage brought it to pass that the quarrels of powerful sovereigns had an influence on

that most important event in a woman's life, her marriage; and caused it, moreover, to be arranged, and the bridegroom decided on, when she was—four years old! It is needless and would be tedious in this place to describe in detail the vicissitudes of war and policy which thus incidentally settled the fate of Vittoria Colonna. It must suffice to say that her noble father, having nobly served and fought for Charles VIII. of France when the latter invaded Naples, nobly turned round on the French king's departure, and nobly served and fought for the rival monarch, Ferdinand II. of Aragon; why, Clio has neglected to record precisely. But there are trustworthy chronicles setting forth the transfer to the Colonnas of sundry fiefs previously held by their hereditary foes the Orsini about this time, and it may be that the King of Naples had held out this noble bait to his noble adherent beforehand. However, thinking it well to have some better hostage for Fabrizio Colonna's fealty than his oath, the King caused Colonna's little girl to be betrothed in marriage to his own subject, Ferdinando Francesco d'Avalos, son of the Marquis of Pescara, a child near her own age.

And now from gloomy, walled Marino, frowning defiance at the enemies of the Colonna, little Vittoria is transported to the rocky island of Ischia, in the Bay of Naples, there to be educated with her future husband under the charge of the elder sister of the latter—the widowed Duchess of Francavilla, born Costanza d'Avalos. Among the many lovely spots in Italy, perhaps there is not one more fit to foster a poet's imagination and the sense of beauty than this island of Ischia. Climate, position, and scenery are all of ideal charm and loveliness. Within the compass of some twenty miles, which is about the circumference of the island, exclusive of the sinuosities of the coast, you have there, as Bishop Berkeley remarked long ago, 'an epitome of the whole earth.' Or rather, perhaps, an epitome of the picturesque. Sea, sky, mountains, and vales, fruits and flowers, make up the scene: and the sea is the Mediterranean, the sky the azure vault that bends above Parthenope, the mountains are slumbering volcanoes, among which the classic Mons Epomeus towers supreme, and the vegetation ranges from the trees and fruits of the temperate zone to the luxuriant products of the tropics. Then, too, Art added the charms of memory and association to those of Nature. Poets, Greek and Latin, have made Ischia eloquent to the fancy as well as to the senses for all time; and across the shining waters you behold the coast line even to the Circean promontory, with Naples, Cumæ, Puteoli, and many another site of old renown. To all this food for eye and mind were added, in Vittoria's case, the vivid splendours

of a mediæval court (of which from time to time she had some glimpses) and the rapid vicissitudes of mediæval warfare, witnessed safely from the citadel of rock-bound Ischia. Surely, if an Olympian council of crowned poets could have been held to consider what spot of earth and point of time should be chosen for the planting and rearing of a mind to serve the Muses, they might have given their voices for Ischia, and that period of the Italian Renaissance, with its abounding artistic and intellectual influences. And yet—our Vittoria did not become a great poet. Emerson says that ‘Man is that noble endogenous plant which grows from within outward;’ and of all varieties of man this surely is truest of the poet. No; Vittoria Colonna was not a great poet. But she has written poems which have merit; and merit not wholly to be appreciated by any save those who have diligently studied the structure of Italian verse, in which the form is so all-important—at least to native critics.

In this Ischia, this fragment of a terrestrial fairy-land, lay the home and haunts of the noble damsel Vittoria Colonna, from her fifth to her nineteenth year; and here, for two more happy, peaceful years, she dwelt as the wife of her childhood’s playmate and her girlhood’s loving companion, Ferdinando Francesco d’Avalos, Marquis of Pescara. There came some events to ruffle the smooth current of her life there from time to time before her marriage, but not of such a nature as to stir its depths. They doubtless afforded a rather pleasantly stimulating excitement to the growing mind and intelligent observation of the young girl. Such must have been the brief visit paid to the island by Frederick, the last of the Aragonese kings of Naples. The Duchess of Francavilla, who was a woman of cultured intellect and powerful character, was made governor and *châtelaine* of Ischia after her husband’s death. And to this citadel, as to a stronghold of refuge, King Frederick fled, accompanied by his wife and children, after the French had taken and sacked Capua, and were advancing upon Naples, in the summer of 1501. Frederick finally left the island to throw himself on the generosity of his adversary, the French King, in the September of the same year. It is recorded that Fabrizio Colonna was with his fallen sovereign on this occasion; and he thus had an opportunity of seeing the progress which his young daughter had made in all graces of mind and person under the teaching and guardianship of the Duchess of Francavilla.¹

At length, at the close of the year 1509, on December 27, the long-betrothed couple were married. The wedding took place at Ischia, and was celebrated with mighty pomp and rejoicing and

¹ *A Decade of Italian Women*, by T. Adolphus Trollope

festivity, after the fashion of weddings in that day between persons of such illustrious birth and powerful connections. Rich presents were interchanged between the bride and bridegroom. A list of them, preserved in the Colonna archives, has been published by Signor Visconti, and includes, amongst other valuable objects, the housing of wrought gold for a mule, and the furniture of a bed in crimson satin and blue taffetas fringed with gold, with crimson satin pillows equally edged and garnished with gold—a somewhat uncomfortable splendour to a weary head, one would fancy! These were gifts from Vittoria and her father to the bridegroom. Pescara, on his part, presented jewels—amongst them a diamond cross with gold chain valued at a thousand ducats—and various articles of female attire, made up of velvet, satin, brocade, and gold embroideries. The prevailing colours were crimson and scarlet. A few years later we catch another glimpse of the noble lady Vittoria Marchesa di Pescara, in all the splendour of her gala attire, on the occasion of a royal wedding at Naples, at which she was an honoured guest. Whilst we are on the subject of *Cinquecento* millinery, it may be as well to describe her appearance at the wedding in this place, although we thus take some liberty with chronology.

On December 6, 1517, the marriage of the King of Poland with Donna Bona Sforza was celebrated with extraordinary pomp at Naples. The contemporary Neapolitan chronicler, Passeri, has left a minute account of the feasting and revels and presents, and the costumes of the noble company on this occasion. But what is at present chiefly interesting to us is his description of the attire of Vittoria and her attendants. Here it is: 'The illustrious lady the Signora Vittoria, Marchioness of Pescara, was mounted on a black and white jennet with housings of crimson velvet fringed with gold. She was attended by six ladies in waiting uniformly clad in azure damask, and by six grooms on foot with cloaks and jerkins of blue and yellow satin. She herself wore a robe of brocaded crimson velvet adorned with large branches of beaten gold, a crimson satin cap, with a head-dress of wrought gold above it, and a girdle of beaten gold round her waist.' And the picture set in this gorgeous framework was of very remarkable brilliancy and beauty. Vittoria was allowed by her contemporaries, and is attested by a portrait preserved in the Colonna gallery at Rome, to have been one of the loveliest women of her day. Her features were classically regular, her brow finely developed, her eyes large and brilliant, and her hair of a peculiarly beautiful golden tint.

Certainly, a more delightful young couple to behold can never have stood side by side at the altar than Vittoria Colonna and

Ferdinando Francisco d'Avalos. For the latter also was celebrated for his handsome person and knightly graces. Bishop Giovio, who wrote a biography of him, says that his beard was auburn, his eyes large and fiery, his nose aquiline. His carriage was habitually proud and haughty. It will be remembered that he was of noble Spanish blood, and it is evident that he prided himself mightily upon that fact. He affected the use of the Spanish tongue in preference to Italian, and is said even to have spoken Spanish with his wife. These qualities and peculiarities have, it is true, more value from the pictorial or melodramatic point of view than as elements for sweetening the companionship of husband and wife in daily life. But Pescara had other and more lovable qualities: he could be mild and gentle with his young wife, to whom he seems to have been truly attached, and he shared with her to some extent the prevailing taste for literature, and especially for poetry, which at that period distinguished the Court of Naples.

The first two years of their married life, passed almost wholly on the island of Ischia, were one long honeymoon. The Marquis and Marchioness of Pescara were happy in the enjoyment of their youth and love amidst the dear familiar scenes of rocky Ischia; and their home was the resort of many of the most cultivated and intellectual men of the time. The talents and reputation of the Duchess of Francavilla had already made that island-home attractive to such spirits; and we may be sure that the attraction was not lessened when Vittoria grew to womanhood and, with her young husband, joined the little band. But then, after two years, a warlike bugle broke in upon the murmur of Arcadian verses, and the soft splash of the blue Mediterranean on the lava rocks, and the love-whispers of the young husband to his girl-bride. In a word, there was fighting about Milan and on the fertile plains of Lombardy and elsewhere, between the King of France and the King of Spain, who was also at that time King of Naples, and Pescara, as a subject of the latter, went and joined the army opposed to the French, under the walls of Ravenna. His going to fight sooner or later was a matter of course. That was the destiny, the career, the business in life, of a well-born young gentleman in his time and country. Vittoria, although grieving at the thought of his departure, made no effort to detain him from his duty. Nay, she encouraged him to fulfil it. So he set off for the field of 'glory,' in company with that renowned captain, his father-in-law, Fabrizio Colonna, early in the spring of the year 1512; and on April 9 the united Spanish and Papal troops were entirely defeated by the French before Ravenna. Fabrizio Colonna and Pescara were both made prisoners. The latter was picked up for dead on

the field of battle, and carried a prisoner to Milan. Here he was well treated, owing chiefly to the influence of Trivulzio, a general in the French service, who had married his aunt, Beatrice d'Avalos; and, as soon as his wounds were healed, he was allowed to ransom himself for the sum of 6,000 ducats.

During his captivity he wrote a 'Dialogo d'Amore,' which he inscribed to his wife and sent to her. On her part, Vittoria addressed a poetical epistle to her husband in prison, which is the first literary work of hers known to us. It is in the *terza rima* used by Dante, and consists of 112 lines. They are well-turned, and 'written in very choice Italian,' but of real feeling and fervour they have very little. Not that Vittoria was devoid of feeling and fervour; but the forcible expression of what she really felt was not her object in writing those 112 lines in the *terza rima*. She intended to make an academic piece of poetry, stuffed full of classic mythology, and as polished in form as she was capable of making it. The motive of affection for her husband was certainly not wanting; but she aimed at pleasing him by a plentiful display of the pedantry in vogue, and by no means by a spontaneous utterance from her woman's heart of hearts. Then in a short time Pescara returned to her unexpectedly, none the worse for his first campaign, save by the loss of his 6,000 ducats and sundry scars on his face—which latter, however, he would probably not have been willing to efface. And when her warrior came back to her, glorious although unsuccessful, she probably found some natural accents with which to welcome him, without calling her learned reminiscences of Hector and Achilles and Cato and Cornelia and Pompey to her assistance.

For a brief time the husband and wife were happy again in each other's society. But early in the year 1513 Pescara was once more with the armies in Lombardy. Vittoria was childless; a circumstance which must have marred in some degree the happiness of her married life, inasmuch as her husband was the last scion of an ancient and noble house, and desired an heir to transmit his name to future times. But the disappointment does not appear to have in the least degree abated his affection and admiration for Vittoria, which is much to his credit. There were not wanting high-handed nobles in that time—especially nobles intensely proud of their illustrious descent, as we know Pescara to have been—who would have visited the misfortune on the innocent wife, at least by harshness and ill-humour, if not by more tragic measures. Being childless, then, Vittoria resolved to adopt and educate a young cousin of her husband's, named Alfonso d'Avalos, Marchese del Vasto. The boy was singularly beautiful and full of intelligence,

but so violent, undisciplined, and ungovernable, that no one had as yet succeeded in training or educating him. Nevertheless Vittoria undertook to do so, and succeeded completely. Under her influence Alfonso grew up to be a distinguished soldier. He is accused, indeed, of great arrogance and cruelty. He is, moreover, accused of perfidy and bad faith. It is not to be denied that his kinsman Pescara, our Vittoria's husband, was publicly known to be arrogant and cruel in the practice of his profession of arms, and was more than suspected of perfidy and bad faith in his political negotiations, and the young Alfonso may have had his part of these family characteristics.

Vain as the attempt would be to analyse and disentangle the complex traits which make up every human character, assigning to each its cause, and tracing, as it were, its genealogy, one yet cannot help attributing those qualities of arrogance and cruelty which so specially marked both these D'Avalos to the Spanish blood of which they were so proud. For arrogance is not, in general, an Italian fault; nor cruelty, except the sudden cruelty which arises from violent and undisciplined passions. Italian cruelty is seldom of a cold and adamant sort, inaccessible to beseeching. In any case, these faults in Alfonso were beyond Vittoria's power to cure, whilst his good qualities were in all probability elicited entirely by her influence. She won the attachment of the spoiled and self-willed boy, who continued to regard her as a mother to the end of his life. And she imbued his mind with some tincture of learning and literature.

When Pescara had gone away again to the wars, his wife remained in Ischia, attending to the education of the young Alfonso; she was the centre of a little band of literary persons who have, many of them, celebrated the charms of those days on the island. Bernardo Tasso, father of the great singer of 'Jerusalem Delivered,' was one of these, and he has left a sonnet apostrophising Ischia as follows:

Superbo scoglio, altero e bel ricetta
 Di tanti chiari eroi, d'imperadori,
 Onde raggi di gloria escono fuori
 Oh'ogni altro lume fan scuro e negletto;

(Proud rock, high and beauteous resort of so many famous heroes and emperors, whence issue rays of glory which make all other lights seem obscure and disregarded, &c.)

The *heroes and emperors* must be understood with some allowance for poetic license; although kings and captains were certainly among the guests on the 'proud rock' from time to time.

Occasionally the Marchioness of Pescara quitted her island-retreat to pay a visit to Naples, as on the occasion of the marriage of the King of Poland with Donna Bona Sforza in 1517, when Vittoria appeared amongst her fellow-nobles with pomp and splendour surpassing that of most of them and equal to any. During the years from 1513 to 1520 Pescara paid several visits to his wife at Ischia, which, though brief, were joyfully welcomed by her, and helped her to support the many weary months of his absence. In 1520 Fabrizio Colonna, Vittoria's father, died, and within two years her brother also. And in the October of that same year (1522) Pescara paid a flying visit to his home. He remained but three days there, and then bade his wife farewell to rejoin the army. It was the last time they ever met. Pescara had been steadily advancing in dignity and reputation as a general during all these years; and after that last parting with Vittoria (which was little guessed to be the last by either of them) several 'brilliant' achievements added to his renown. One of them was the memorable battle of Pavia, fought on February 24, 1525, when Francis I., King of France, was taken prisoner, and of which he gave a laconic account to his mother in the well-known words, 'Tout est perdu fors l'honneur.' Pescara received three wounds, none of them dangerous, in the battle, and claimed the custody of the royal prisoner. But Francis was taken out of his hands into Spain, and Pescara complained loudly on the subject to his sovereign, Charles V., who had succeeded Ferdinand on the thrones of Spain and Naples in 1516. Pescara was now, at the age of thirty-five, Charles V.'s general-in-chief in Lombardy, and was high in the monarch's confidence. His discontent at having his captive taken away from him was matter of public notoriety, and upon it Pope Clement VII. and some others founded a hope that it might be possible to seduce Pescara from his allegiance to Charles, and bring him over to their own side, which was (now, and after much trimming and vacillation) that of opposition to the Spanish power in Italy. The army under Pescara's command would have been an almost irresistible engine for the purpose of crushing the Spaniards could he have been induced so to use it. An attempt was made to sound the great captain on this point, and the great captain appeared to receive the advances favourably. 'Appeared,' because in the sequel he revealed the whole plot to Charles V., declaring that from the first he had only intended to draw on the conspirators to their own betrayal, and had never contemplated treachery to his sovereign for an instant. But there is strong reason for believing that Pescara did waver in his allegiance—to use no harsher phrase. And one of the reasons for so believing is

that Vittoria, hearing some rumour of the negotiations in hand, wrote a letter to her husband, imploring him in the strongest terms 'to consider well what he was doing, mindful of his pristine fame and estimation; and that, for her part, she cared not to be the wife of a king, but rather to be joined with a faithful and loyal man; that it is not riches, titles, and kingdoms which can give true glory, infinite praise, and perpetual renown to noble spirits desirous of eternal fame, but faith, sincerity, and other virtues of the soul; and that with these, men may rise higher than the highest kings, not only in war, but in peace.'¹

Very noble words, and worthy of the high commendation which Vittoria's biographers and many other historians bestow on them. Signor Visconti asserts that this letter from his wife was the chief cause which determined Pescara to abandon the idea of betraying his sovereign. At all events, the fact that she wrote such a letter proves that Vittoria was not secure of her husband's steadfastness. And yet it would not be just to expect that Vittoria should regard his behaviour with the same sentiments which it awakens in us. In the first place, we behold Ferdinando Francisco d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, under the solar microscope of historical investigation; she saw him by the *chiaro-scuro* of human love and intercourse, and (in this case) from a distance which softened and changed the aspect of his actions. In the next place, if we could have interrogated Pescara at the time, he would probably have pleaded in excuse (supposing him to have contemplated treachery) the ill-usage he had received at the hands of the sovereign he had served. Not that such a plea could really justify treachery, but it might easily suffice so to obfuscate the very imperfect moral sense of a *Cinque-cento* soldier of fortune, as to lead him to think himself in the right to make reprisals. Anger and disappointed self-love have been known so to operate upon the human mind, even in subsequent periods of the world's history. Vittoria had a superior intelligence and a purer conscience, and she saw the matter more clearly.

The end of the story was that Pescara remained true to Charles V., and gave up the chief mover in the conspiracy (Morone, chancellor and prime-minister of the Duke of Milan) into his hands. And in return he received the rank of generalissimo of the Imperial forces in Italy. But this dignity he did not long enjoy. A singular decay of his strength began to manifest itself in the autumn of that same year (1525), which the medical skill of his physicians seems to have been unable to account for. It could scarcely have resulted from the wounds he

received at the battle of Pavia, which are expressly stated to have been very slight. Some writers have attributed Pescara's malady to anxiety of mind preying on him lest Charles V. should discover that he had not from the beginning been firmly minded to take no part in the conspiracy headed by the Pope. It seems more probable that the illness was of the nature of consumption. Towards the end of the year Pescara gave up all hope of recovery. He despatched a missive from Milan, where he then was, to his wife, begging her to hasten to him. She set off without delay, but when she had got as far as Viterbo on her northward journey, she was met by the news of her husband's death. He died on November 25, 1525, and was buried at Milan. But his biographer, Bishop Giovio, says that his body was shortly afterwards transported to Naples, with great pomp and magnificence.

The shock of her husband's premature death—he was not yet thirty-six years old—appears to have crushed Vittoria utterly for a time. She hastened from Viterbo to Rome, on receiving the dreadful news, and sought a retreat in the convent of San Silvestro in Capite, inhabited by nuns of the order of Santa Chiara. The origin of this church dates from a venerable antiquity. But the present edifice has been over and over again restored and re-modernised, and the present external façade is no older than the year 1703. Its great boast and treasure—whence it derives its title 'in Capite'—is that precious relic, the head of St. John the Baptist. The authenticity of this relic, together with that of another, the image of the Saviour, sent by Him through the hands of the Apostle St. Thaddeus to an Armenian king, and long preserved in the city of Edessa, was solemnly confirmed by Pope Clement VIII. on November 17, 1595. But probably no such measure was needed to strengthen the faith of all good Catholics in Vittoria Colonna's time. The chief reason why the newly-made widow chose San Silvestro as her retreat was that her family had for centuries been munificent patrons and benefactors of that church and convent. The church is now, as has been stated, much re-modernised, and the convent is partly turned into artillery barracks.

It seems to have been Vittoria's first intention to devote herself entirely to a conventual life, and to take the veil. But her friends—even those of the ecclesiastic hierarchy—were by no means willing that so brilliant an ornament of lay society as the beautiful, gifted, and wealthy Marchioness of Pescara should be lost to the world. Jacopo Sadoletto, Bishop of Carpentras, one of the most learned men of his time, obtained from Pope Clement VII., whose secretary he then was, a brief addressed to the abbess and nuns of

San Silvestro enjoining them to receive into their house the Marchesana di Pescara, and to comfort her 'omnibus spiritualibus et temporalibus consolationibus,'¹ but forbidding them, on pain of the greater excommunication, to permit her to take the veil 'impetu potius sui doloris, quam maturo consilio circa mutationem vestium vidualium in monasticas.'² This brief is dated December 7, 1525.

Vittoria remained with the nuns until the autumn of the following year, when she was taken to Marino by her brother Ascanio, now the head of the Colonna family. That turbulent clan raised a tumult in Rome in September 1526, being partisans of the Emperor, and consequently in opposition to the Pope. They, of course, took that opportunity of sacking every house belonging to the Orsini, their hereditary enemies. In consequence of these outrages the Pope deprived Cardinal Colonna of his hat, and declared all the estates of the family confiscated.

Upon this Vittoria quitted Marino and returned to Ischia, which must more than ever have appeared to her a haven of peace and safety after the stormy scenes of which Rome and its neighbourhood were now the theatre. And worse storms were to follow. In 1527 took place that tremendous sack of Rome by the troops of the Constable de Bourbon which plunged the devoted city into a sea of nameless horrors. It may be mentioned by the way that the poor nuns of Santa Chiara at San Silvestro came very near to losing their precious relic, the Baptist's head, at this time. Pope Boniface VIII., in the thirteenth century, had placed above the tabernacle which contained the relic (which tabernacle was itself a marvellously rich and beautiful work in silver ornamented with precious stones, the gift of Pope Martin IV.) a costly tiara, or triple crown. In order to save John the Baptist's head from the destructive rapacity of the soldiery the good sisters placed the tiara on another skull, which was (naturally) at once seized on and carried away, the troops of the Constable de Bourbon strictly limiting their attention to terrestrial treasures and such as were of marketable value.

But whilst cruelty, greed, and license made of Rome a hell upon earth, peace and tranquillity reigned in the home at rocky Ischia, even if the brightness of happy love had left it for ever. And now Vittoria appears for the first time to have devoted herself seriously to the writing of poetry, which became, indeed, the chief occupation of her life. Her poems consist almost entirely of

¹ 'With all spiritual and temporal consolations.'

² 'From the impulse of her grief rather than from mature counsel concerning the change of her widow's weeds into the monastic habit.'

sonnets; and of these sonnets some hundred and thirty-four are inspired by grief at the loss of her husband, to whom she invariably alludes as *mio bel sole*, 'my fair sun.' The rest of her poems are religious. I have before me, as I write, a little volume of her poems which bears the following inscription on its title-page:

'Rime della S. Vittoria Colonna, Marchesana Illust. di Pescara. Con l'aggiunta delle rime spirituali. Di nuovo ricorrette per M. Lodovico Dolce. In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari.' MDLIX. This year was the twelfth after her death. But there had been already three¹ editions of her poems during her lifetime, and her fame as a poetess (not unassisted, probably, by the facts that she was very handsome, very wealthy, of high and unblemished reputation, and illustrious birth) had gained for her the title of 'La Divina.'

The fifth of the sonnets in memory of her husband, beginning 'Oh che tranquillo mar,' is, I think, not only polished verse, but true sentiment. It seems to refer to the period of her first return to Ischia after her husband's death. The images in it are such as would naturally be suggested by revisiting such scenes under such circumstances. She apostrophises the tranquil sea, the placid waves, whereon her bark was wont to float laden with precious merchandise, and seconded by a serene sky and favouring breezes; and contrasts them with the storm and darkness which cruel fortune brought upon her in later years. Heaven assembles around her 'venti, piogge, saette,'—winds, rains, and lightnings—like monsters ready to devour her. But 'l'alma ancor sua tramontana scorge.' Still her soul discerns its polar star. Another very beautiful sonnet is the one beginning

Qui fece il mio bel Sol a noi ritorno;

beautiful, however, chiefly from the touch of intense womanly nature in the ninth and tenth lines: 'Vinto da prieghi miei poi mi mostrava *Le belle cicatrici*.' I have turned the sonnet into English which is at least faithful to the original:

Here 'twas that my fair sun to me returned,
With princely spoils all laden from the fight.
Ah, with what grief these scenes afflict my sight
Where erst his cheering beams so clearly burned!
A thousand glories, by his valour earned
Allegiance, honour, faith of loftiest height,
Whereof to tell loud rumour did delight,
Upon his noble brow were well discerned.
And then he showed me, vanquished by my prayer,
His lovely scars, and told the time and place

¹ Four, according to Tiraboschi, *Letteratura Italiana* vii. 1722.

Of all his victories to my ravished ears.
As once my joy, so now is my despair,
Whilst my sad thoughts the vanished past retrace,
Amid some sweet, and many bitter, tears.

That seems to me to have come from the depths of the heart. The picture must have been taken from the life. One can see the proud doating wife importuning her hero to show her his 'lovely scars,' and the husband complying with a tolerant smile, as who should say 'this fond feminine folly must be humoured,' and yet secretly well pleased that his prowess is so highly appreciated by the woman he loves. And then those days are gone like a dream, and the widow sits thinking of them 'Amid some sweet, and many bitter, tears.'

Nearly three years were thus passed by Vittoria in her Ischian home. But in 1530 she was driven from it by the approach of a pestilence which followed, and probably resulted from, the devastating warfare in the kingdom of Naples between Francis I. and Charles V. She went to Rome, where she appears to have been the guest of her sister-in-law, Donna Giovanna d'Aragona, wife of Ascanio Colonna, a woman of beauty and accomplishments. The Colonna family had made peace with Pope Clement, and had their fiefs restored to them. The Eternal City was beginning to recover from the horrors of the sack of 1527, and numbers of learned and cultured personages, who had been driven away by the slaughter and its attendant horrors, were flocking back to Rome. Among these many were Vittoria's personal friends, and she was received with the warmest cordiality and the highest honours. Her adopted son, the Marchese del Vasto, was in Rome at this period, which altogether must have been a very pleasant one for our poetess, albeit she still mourned her husband's loss in all sincerity.

There were, of course, plenty of wooers ready to compete for the hand of the wealthy, beautiful, and noble widow. But she remained true to the memory of her first and only love. Those were the days of revived *classicism*, and the worship of pagan antiquity—in so far as arts and letters were concerned—and Vittoria had learning enough to participate in the discussions and conversations held among these enthusiasts of the Renaissance on many a classic theme. She joined in excursions to the ruins of antique Rome, and doubtless visited all the famous spots within the city with which the modern traveller is familiar. There were the aqueducts, the temples, the triumphal arches, the mighty Coliseum, the Thermæ of Caracalla and Diocletian, the splendid curves of the Pantheon's lofty dome, in her time as in ours. The same blue air and golden sunlight shone upon them, painting decay with beauty;

and the same summer moon sailed in the midnight skies, flooding wide spaces with a silver sea, and deepening velvet shadows beneath porch and pillar. Molza, a contemporary poet of some fame, has recorded some of these meetings among the knot of distinguished personages who surrounded Vittoria. But his records are too bloodless, academic, and artificial to be of any interest to the modern reader.

After a stay in Rome of less than a year the Marchesa di Pescara returned to Ischia, and there remained until the year 1536. During this period she was engaged in correspondence with most of the distinguished Italians, lay and ecclesiastic, then living. In 1534, Paul III., the Farnese Pope, had succeeded Clement on the throne of St. Peter, and a strong current of religious thought and religious reform was stirring the stagnant waters of the Church in Italy. There were hopes, dreams, aspirations towards a possibility of reconciling the requirements of the German reformers in the matter of doctrine, with the requirements of Italian ecclesiastics in the matter of temporalities. To preach and teach pure Gospel doctrines, and at the same time to hold fast the worldly power and supremacy which has made the Papacy what it is, was a problem not recognised to be insoluble in the middle of the sixteenth century. The minds of all men of the better and more earnest sort were occupied with these all-important topics.

The mind of Vittoria Colonna was, beyond doubt, occupied with them. The cast of her poetry—which greatly changed about this time—and the character of those who were her chosen intimates, alike indicate that she was far from indifferent to the great questions of religious reform. Her Italian biographers (mostly ecclesiastics) have striven eagerly to clear her from a suspicion of any leaning towards heresy. These efforts are from one point of view superfluous; from another ineffectual. If all that is meant be that Vittoria Colonna never contemplated leaving the pale of the Roman Catholic Church to go forth into bleak pastures with heretics, that may be at once and fully admitted. But if it be contended that she was fully satisfied with the condition of that Church as it was, and accepted with an unquestioning mind whatever its ministers might teach her, then the contention must be resisted. The little knot of men who for a long time formed her intimate society were all more or less interested in the great question of Church Reform: such as Contarini the Venetian, Sadoleto, Bishop of Carpentras, Pole (then a fugitive from England), Giberti, Bishop of Verona, &c. These men were raised to the purple by Paul III. solely for their learning, earnestness, and devoutness—grounds which would have weighed but little with his

immediate predecessors. But heresy without, has always had an antiseptic influence on the inner circles of the Roman hierarchy.

To this period probably belong those of her sonnets in which justification by faith, the necessity of the new birth, or spiritual regeneration, and other Protestantising doctrines, are expressed with more or less clearness. The following translations of extracts from these sonnets are taken from the Life of Vittoria Colonna in T. Adolphus Trollope's 'Decade of Italian Women :'

Confiding in His just and gentle sway,
We should not dare, like Adam and his wife,
On others' backs our proper blame to lay ;
But with new-kindled hope, and unfeigned grief,
Passing by priestly robes, lay bare within
To Him alone the secret of our sin.

The words in Italics are, in the original,

Aprir dentro, passando oltra la gonna,
I falli nostri a solo a sol con lui.

'Passando oltra la gonna' is a somewhat obscure phrase—possibly purposely obscure. Its literal meaning is 'passing beyond the gown.'

Again, in another sonnet we read :

Thus can the soul her high election make
Fruitful and sure ; but only to such point
As, in His goodness, wills the Fount of good.
Nor art nor industry can speed her course ;
He most securely and alertly runs
Who most by Heaven's free favour is upheld.¹

And yet once more :

He who hath fixed on Christ alone his eyes,
Not he who best hath understood, or read
Most earthly volumes, shall Heaven's bliss attain.
For not on paper did He write His law,
But printed it on expurgated hearts
Stamped with the fire of Jesus' holy love.²

¹ Ond' ella può ben far certa, efficace
L'alta sua elezion, ma insino al segno,
Ch' all' autor d'ogni ben sua merce piace.
Non sprona il corso nostro industria o ingegno ;
Quel corre più sicuro e più vivace,
Ch'ha del favor del ciel maggior sostegno.

² Quel ch'avrà sol in lui le luci fisse
Non que' ch' intese meglio, o che più lesse
Volumi in terra, in ciel sarà beato.
In carta questa legge non si scrisse ;
Ma con la stampa sua nel cor purgato,
Col foco dell' amor, Gesù l'imprime.

Vittoria Colonna returned to Rome in the course of the year 1536, and again resided with her sister-in-law, Donna Giovanna d'Aragona. Vittoria was now in the full maturity of her powers, and at the height of her fame. Her return to Rome was hailed with delight by the best and most learned among the good and learned men there. She was loaded with honours. Even, as her biographer, Signor Visconti, asserts, on the authority of a Neapolitan historian, the great Emperor Charles V., Cæsar himself, being then in Rome, 'condescended to visit in their own house the ladies Giovanna d'Aragona, wife of Ascanio Colonna, and Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara.' She has left more than one sonnet addressed to Charles V. in which the courtier is less seen than the wife. She declares that the flight of the (imperial) eagle is troubled and obscured by the absence of her 'fair sun.' In another place, after singing the vast and extended empire of Charles, she says that her 'fair sun,' who, 'in order to clear the way for the eagle's flight, chased away so many dark clouds,' now enjoys the fruit of his valiant and virtuous deeds in Heaven. In short, for Vittoria, Charles V. may be a very great potentate, but her Ferdinando Francesco d'Avalos is an infinitely higher hero—and she says so!

After a short stay in Rome she went to Lucca, and thence to Ferrara, arriving in the latter city on April 8, 1537. Of her visit to Lucca her biographer, Signor Visconti, says but little. He mentions the bare fact, without comment or explanation. But perhaps some light may, for us, be thrown on it by the knowledge that Lucca was at this period a hotbed of heterodox opinions, and that the Republic went very near to declaring Protestantism as the religion of the state! In Ferrara, too, the Reformed faith had many adherents, beginning with the Duchess Renée, wife of Duke Hercules II. But although Vittoria may have been tempted by the hope of interchanging thoughts on these serious subjects with the favourers of the new ideas, there is no need to suppose that this was her sole, or even her chief, inducement to visit Ferrara. She was received there with the highest honours paid to her poetical distinction. The Duke, as we are told, invited the most distinguished poets and men of letters of Venice and Lombardy to meet her at Ferrara; and Cardinal Giberto sent thither a special messenger, his secretary, Francesco della Torre, to beg her to honour his episcopal city of Verona with her presence. A significant little fact is recorded by the historian Frizzi, in his '*Memorie per la Storia di Ferrara*,' which does not appear to have been mentioned by Vittoria's biographers. I will give it in the words of Frizzi.¹

¹ Frizzi, iv. 333.

‘More noteworthy, however,’ (than the establishment of a certain monastery of Santa Lucia) ‘was the introduction into Ferrara of the Capuchins. Bernardino Ochino of Siena, a friar of that most exemplary order, established about 1525, had several times preached the Word of God in our cathedral. Vittoria Colonna, widow of Ferdinand d’Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, both celebrated—the one for her elegance in the poetic art not less than for Christian virtues, the other for military valour—arrived at Ferrara on April 8, 1537, in humble guise, accompanied by six of her women, on her way, as was said, to Venice, whence she intended to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She, who was a great patroness of Ochino so long as he continued to walk in the right way, by the influence of the Duke obtained from the Cavalière Alfonso Trotti the gift of an oratory, together with a small piece of ground belonging to him in the Borgo della Misericordia, on the Po, and precisely in the street called “De’ Galafasi;” and there, having built a modest retreat, she placed Ochino and a few of his brethren on August 18. Fra Bernardino, during the time he dwelt there, preached in the cathedral in the Advent of that year; and subsequently was elected general of his order.’

Frizzi goes on to say that it would have been well had that been the last chronicle remaining to us of the famous Capuchin, but that unfortunately the story is too well known of his deplorable falling off, some years later, into ‘Lutheranism and Socinianism,’ and his having written books full of error and impiety. This celebrated preacher is designated in the ‘Biographie Universelle’ as an ‘ambitious and apostate monk.’ An apostate from the authority of Rome he undoubtedly was—or a convert from her errors, according to the point of view of the speaker—but his ambition at any rate was not of a worldly kind. The very same writer adds that, after having gained an enormous reputation as a preacher, which contributed not a little to the advancement of his newly-founded order, and, after having been twice elected general of it, it was surprising to see him quit this dignity, embrace heresy, and fly to Geneva, in company with a young girl of Lucca whom he married. This is scarcely the proceeding of an ambitious man, as ambition is usually understood. But the writer says that it was due, ‘à ce qu’on prétend,’ to the mortification caused by his not obtaining the cardinal’s hat which he aspired to. But why did he not obtain the cardinal’s hat, at a period when the Church was eager for recruits who could fight her battles seriously and valiantly, and after having proved himself to possess enormous power over men’s minds in the pulpit? Surely his failing to obtain it was due to his heretical opinions; and to say that he became a heretic because the Pope

would not make him a cardinal is a putting of the cart before the horse!

However this may be, it is evident from a mass of varied testimony that Fra Bernardino was considered as a burning and a shining light by the highest and best members of his own Church during a long period. Indeed, he seems to have come near to being looked on as a saint. There is a letter extant from Cardinal Bembo to a parish priest¹ begging the latter to enjoin Fra Bernardino to eat meat during Lent, 'not for the comfort of his body, which we know he heeds not,' but to enable him to preach and teach the word of God to the faithful; for 'if he continues to fast, he will not be able to hold out during the Lenten season.' Other letters of Bembo, addressed to Vittoria Colonna, prove how great was her influence over and interest in Fra Bernardino. One of these, dated from Venice April 6, 1538, begins thus:²

'I am prayed by divers gentles in this city to intercede with your grace, that you would be pleased to persuade your (*sic*) Padre Fra Bernardino da Siena to come hither next Lent and preach in the church of the Holy Apostles, to the reverence and honour of our Lord God: which thing they greatly desire to obtain from his reverence. Nor they alone, but all the citizens, are in infinite expectation of hearing him.' The request was complied with, for early in the following year Bembo writes again to thank the noble lady, and to express his admiration of the Friar's eloquence and piety. In fact, the Cardinal declares that 'he had never heard such preaching in the pulpit in his day.'

Vittoria's projected pilgrimage to the Holy Land did not take place. The Marchese del Vasto came from Milan to Ferrara expressly to dissuade her from undertaking it, and also to induce her to leave Ferrara, which did not agree with her health. She accordingly returned to Rome, where she was received with almost public rejoicings. This was about the close of the year 1537.

Here our poetess was surrounded by admirers who were themselves personages of the highest distinction in literature. The 'laudari a laudato viro' was hers in no stinted measure. Bembo, Giudiccioni, Veronica Gambara, Bernardo Tasso, Bishop Giovio, and Cardinal Pompeo Colonna—not to mention a host of others whose name and fame are less familiar to posterity—vied with each other in extolling her learning, judgment, and genius. But the greatest event of this period of Vittoria's life was undoubtedly the commencement of her friendship with Michael Angelo. The mighty master was at this time in his sixty-third year, Vittoria in

¹ *Opere del Card. Pietro Bembo*, Milan, 1810, ix. 487.

² *Op. cit.*, viii. 108.

her forty-seventh. She speedily obtained great influence over his mind, especially on the point of religion. There are several of his poems inscribed to her. In one of these (Sonnet LVII.) he says that she has perfected his character as a sculptor perfects his clay model, by carving it in the hard living stone. And in another place (Madrigale LVII.) he says, 'Let me address my verse to you, you who have guided my life towards Heaven by the most beautiful paths.' A strong sympathy existed between the two, alike honourable to both. And it lasted uninterruptedly until her death, which was a bitter grief to Michael Angelo.

Vittoria's pleasant life among her friends in Rome was interrupted by painful circumstances. The Pope Paul III. imposed an increased tax on salt in the year 1539. Ascanio Colonna thereupon maintained that by virtue of some ancient privilege the new tax could not be levied on his domains. Nevertheless the pontifical tax-gatherers imprisoned some Colonna vassals for refusing to pay it; and by way of reprisal Ascanio assembled his retainers, and made a raid into the Campagna, driving off a large number of cattle. How strange it is to find this evidence of barbarous lawlessness, reminding us of the uncivilised Highlanders of a century ago, co-existing with a high degree of culture and polish in some departments of human civilisation!

Vittoria Colonna was studying Petrarch, adding to her classic learning amid the ruins of Rome, discussing philosophy and theology with Pole and Bembo, and art with Michael Angelo, whilst her brother was harrying the country side, and 'lifting' cattle, like any Johnnie Armstrong or Rob Roy of them all! The result of Ascanio Colonna's raid was that the Pope gathered an army of 10,000 men, and declared 'war' on his rebellious subject. After a tough struggle, chiefly disastrous, of course, to numbers of innocent peasants, the Pope's forces got the better of Colonna's; and the principal strongholds of the latter being taken, their fortifications were ordered to be razed to the ground. During the progress of these hostilities Vittoria quitted Rome and retired to Orvieto, probably about the end of the year 1540.

Orvieto enjoys one of the most striking views, and is placed in one of the most picturesque positions, of any city in Italy. Perched on a huge mass of volcanic tufa which rises sheer up from the undulating country below, Orvieto dominates the landscape for miles. The colour of its ancient buildings is nearly identical with the reddish brown of the rock they stand on; and from a little distance *the whole mass, rock and town and cathedral, looks as if it had been carved by giant hands out of one solid piece, as the grand outlines stand out dark against the pellucid sky.* When I first

saw the place it was in the early autumn. Italian summer sunshine had ripened and then parched the vegetation. The leaves on the trees were as bronze, the soil like refuse ore from a furnace, and the heavens like brass above them. Arid, burnt, and desolate the landscape looked, viewed from the wide terraced space in which the grand cathedral stands. The river Paglia crawled along with changing lights and colours, like a dying snake, in the midst of a wide desert of shingle and brown dust, which in the spring-time is hidden by a torrent of turbid foamy waters. I was reminded of a picture I had seen long ago of Jerusalem. There was the same bold and jagged height on which the city stands, the same wild undulating country below, the same grey olives, the same indescribable effect of thirsty dryness which one associates with the East, and the same—or something like the same—ineffable, translucent, brilliant atmosphere, producing the most extraordinarily vivid colouring both in the lights and shadows. The lights were clear positive reds, browns, yellows, ambers; the shadows pearly lilac, ultramarine, and indigo. I do not think any sadness of grey northern skies, with blurred horizons and fleecy mists, could equal in sadness the effect of that intensely clear and beautiful atmosphere shining on a desert. The pathos of it was unspeakable. And yet the 'desert' was but in seeming. Wine of a peculiarly exquisite kind is grown abundantly on those crumbling hills; and oil and hemp and other products are plentiful. Seen in May or latter April, the whole scene is changed as if by magic. Water and green leaves and fruit blossoms, pink and white, transform it into something, less sublime perhaps, but pleasanter for human eyes to rest on frequently. All is softer, sweeter, fresher, more cheerful. There is all the difference between hope and memory.

Vittoria came to Orvieto from Rome in the waning of the year. But to what extent those external aspects of nature, which are so potent with us moderns, influenced her moods, there are no means to know. Probably the wonderful landscape, with the necropolis burrowed by Etruscan tombs but a few miles from the city, was of infinitely less interest to her than the artistic glories of the Duomo. Its chief treasures—the mosaics of the façade, the internal frescoes, and especially those of Beato Angelico da Fiesole and Luca Signorelli in the chapel called of the Madonna di San Brizio—were in their places long before Vittoria visited Orvieto; although Luca Signorelli did not commence his frescoes in the chapel until the year 1499, when Vittoria was nine years old. It is said that Michael Angelo studied the subjects representing the Last Judgment here before finishing his great work in the Sistine Chapel.

It is a very striking testimony to the high estimation in which Vittoria's personal character and qualities were held, to find her visited in her voluntary exile at Orvieto by many of the most influential personages of Paul III.'s court. Indeed, notwithstanding the frequent feuds between that Pope and the Colonna clan, and the dislike of the masterful Farnese to this equally masterful family, there are several proofs that Vittoria possessed some influence over the Pontiff. Bembo distinctly ascribes his elevation to the purple to her patronage and friendship. And she was not suffered to remain long absent from Rome, where she was greatly missed by the higher circles of cultivated society. She returned to the Eternal City in the late summer of 1541. From this time up to her death her time was divided between Rome and Viterbo, an ancient episcopal city some thirty miles to the north of it. In Viterbo she resided chiefly in the convent of the nuns of Saint Catherine, and the principal members of her society were Cardinal Pole, the Governor of Viterbo, Marco Antonio Flaminio, and Archbishop Soranzo.

The convent of Saint Catherine of Alexandria was inhabited by Dominican nuns of the second order. They were only introduced into Viterbo on September 30, 1529, so that the establishment was still young when Vittoria was in the habit of residing there. And in one of her letters to Michael Angelo she speaks of her duties to the youthful inmates of the convent, and she clearly was interested in the community and fostered it.

Viterbo enjoys the reputation of a salubrious climate. Its neighbourhood is agriculturally productive, and the town itself must have been in Vittoria Colonna's time most strikingly picturesque. It boasted of a number of battlemented towers of uncommon height. In the year 1596 a topographical plan of the city was published by a native of Viterbo named Tarquinius Ligustri, in which a goodly number of these are marked. Indeed, at one period it is said by a native historian that Viterbo presented the appearance of 'a forest of towers.' The cathedral of San Lorenzo is remarkable for its position on a hill, the whole mass of which is absolutely honeycombed by caves and hollows, most of them sepulchres of the ancient Etruscans. There, as indeed throughout the Roman territory, nothing is more striking than the evidence of one stratum over another of extinct civilisations, as clearly recognisable by the eye as the strata of certain geological formations. In this part of the world the Present seems in some *strange* way to supersede the Past without effacing it.

One little circumstance, calculated to throw some light on the vexed question of Vittoria's Protestant tendencies, may be men-

tioned in connection with Viterbo. It has been stated that the convent of Saint Catherine was the special object of her fostering care. Now, it is briefly recorded by Moroni¹ that in 1555—that is to say, only eight years after Vittoria's death, and when the younger members of the sisterhood whom she had trained may be supposed to have obtained some standing and influence—'many nuns became infected with heresy.' Afterwards, he says, the convent came again 'into good odour.' But not until 1731 do we hear of any specially pious or distinguished sisters there; so that the 'infection of heresy' must have been strong and not quickly got rid of. It is fair to add that an authentic letter of Vittoria's is extant, in which she strongly blames her former favourite, Fra Bernardino Ochino, for his abandonment of the Roman Catholic Church, and says that he is 'out of the ark which saves and secures.' In a word, Vittoria was one of the many Italians who considered that schism and a denial of the supremacy of Rome were, on the whole, worse evils than the endurance of corrupt teachers and immoral doctrine at the expense of some violence to conscience. For a time some good persons—she, doubtless, among them—thought that reform and orthodoxy might be made compatible with each other.

At the end of the year 1544 Vittoria returned once more to Rome, where she took up her abode in the convent of the Benedictines of Saint Anne. Her health began to fail rapidly, and her friends became so uneasy as to importune her physician to lavish every care and skill on his illustrious patient. Fracastoro, a celebrated physician and poet, was written to at Verona for his advice and opinion on the case. He does not appear to have understood clearly the nature of her malady, but attributes it partly to moral causes.

The latter years of Vittoria's life were certainly clouded by sorrow. The fortunes of her family were no longer flourishing, and the enmity between her brother and the Pope must have grieved her on other grounds. And then, too, the death of the Marchese del Vasto in the prime of his life, was a very heavy blow. Vittoria grieved for him as though she had been in truth his mother.

As she became gradually weaker she was removed from the convent of St. Anne to the house of Giuliano Cesarini, the husband of Giulia Colonna, the only one of her kindred then in Rome. And there she died in the month of February, 1547, being about fifty-seven years old. Her devoted and affectionate friend, Michael Angelo, visited her in her last moments. The pupil and biographer of Michael Angelo, Ascanio Condivi, speaking of this circumstance,

¹ *Dizionario d'Erudizione*, cii. 200.

says: 'He (Michael Angelo), on his part, so loved her, that I remember hearing him say that, when he went to see her when she was dying, he lamented that he had not kissed her face as he did her hand.'

So passed away Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara; a woman whose intellect, and still more the unblemished purity of her character, make her a figure worthy of all reverence in the gallery of Italian women of letters. She especially directed that her funeral should be in all respects like that of one of the nuns of the convent which had last received her, and her behest was obeyed. Not a stone, not a tablet, remains to record the place where she was buried.

Old Football Gossip.

It is within comparatively recent times that football ceased to be a pastime of the people of this country, and became, first a school game, and then, under the fostering care of Union or Association, the scientific winter sport so popular just now. This later phase of the game lies outside the purpose of the present paper, which is to gather together some of the many notable incidents in the long career of the old football—the rough, unscientific game of our ancestors for many centuries on both sides of the Border.

Indeed, except in name, the new and the old games have little in common. The roughest 'Rugby game' of to-day is mild and harmless when compared with the contests of two or three hundred years ago, when parish fought parish, or all the men of one county kicked their hardest to defeat a neighbouring shire. In its primitive form the game was merely a trial of speed, strength, and endurance; there were no rules, and little science. Naturally, therefore, when the player could use any means to bring victory to his side, the violence of the game soon greatly increased. The heroes of the field became those who could plunge into the struggling mass of players, grappling right and left, and giving at least as good as they got in 'hacks' on the shins, or more direct blows that laid opposing players sprawling on their backs, with a strong probability of serious damage to limb or even to life. Victory in such a struggle was to be looked for more from the reckless use of muscular strength than from agility or skill; so violent, indeed, did many of the matches become, that at a very early period they were put down by authority as a public nuisance. 'From this court,' writes James I. to his eldest son, 'I debarre all rough and violent exercises, as the footeball, meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof.'

It is difficult to determine when football originated among us. It is doubtful whether this is the ball-game Fitzstephen speaks of among the pastimes of the Londoners in the time of Henry II.; perhaps the first authentic mention of it in English history is when Edward III., in 1349, found it necessary to put down our game and several others, because they interfered with the all-important practice of archery among his subjects. Eighty years afterwards the Scottish king had, for the same reason, to pass the first of a series of Acts against this and other 'unprofitabill sportis':

but as he and his followers, keen players all, paid little attention to their own edicts, the game naturally continued quite as popular as ever.

Shrove Tuesday was the great day in the year for football-matches in all parts of the kingdom. A great many of these contests were held in the streets of towns, when windows had to be barricaded, women kept indoors, and the place given over for the day to a contest that too often ended in fights and broken bones. Strutt quotes a Chester antiquary, who says that 'it had been the custom, time out of mind, for the shoemakers yearly on the Shrove Tuesday to deliver to the drapers, in the presence of the Mayor of Chester, at the cross on the Rodehee, one ball of leather called a footeball, of the value of three shillings and fourpence, or above, to play at from thence to the Common Hall of the said city; which practice was productive of much inconvenience, and therefore this year (1540), by consent of the parties concerned, the ball was changed into six glayves of silver of the like value, as a prize for the best runner that day upon the aforesaid Rodehee.'

Perhaps in no place was this Shrovetide sport pursued with greater energy than at Scone, in Perthshire. The sides consisted of the married and single men of the neighbourhood, who assembled at the village cross at two in the afternoon of the 'Fastern's E'en,' as Shrove Tuesday is called in Scotland. At that hour the ball was thrown up, and the game, by immemorial custom, had to last till sunset. The minister of the parish describes the game thus in Sir John Sinclair's 'Statistical Account of Scotland:' The player who at any time got the ball into his hands ran with it till he was overtaken by one of the opposite party; then, if he could shake himself loose from those on the opposite side who seized him, he ran on; if not, he threw the ball from him, unless it was wrested from him by the other party, but no one was allowed to kick it! The object of the married men was to 'hang' it, that is, to put it three times into a small hole on the moor, which was the *dool* or limit on the one hand; that of the bachelors was to 'drown' the ball, or dip it three times into a deep place in the river, the goal on their side. The party who could effect either of these objects won the game; but if neither side succeeded in winning a goal, the ball was cut into two equal parts at sunset. In the course of the game there was usually such violence between the parties that this match gave rise to a proverb in Scotland, 'All is fair at the Ba' of Scone.' Tradition said that this match was instituted centuries ago to commemorate the victory of a Scone champion over an Italian knight who had challenged the chivalry of the county. However this may be, while the custom lasted,

every man, gentle or simple, in the district had to turn out to support his side, on pain of fine. At the time the minister wrote—1796—this old match had been discontinued for a few years, and it has never been revived.

The famous match that up to about forty years ago used to begin in the market-place of Derby on Shrove Tuesday afternoon is a good example of the old game south of the Tweed. The good folks of Derby turned out in all their bravery to witness the struggle. Ladies filled the windows overlooking the market-place, where, at 2 p.m., the men of St. Peter's parish met to do battle with all comers from the other parishes of the town. The ball was of very strong leather, a foot in diameter, and stuffed hard with cork shavings. At the appointed hour this ball was tossed into the air, and the mass of about a thousand players made a rush at it, the one side, whose rallying-cry was 'St. Peter's,' trying to drive the ball towards their goal, the gate of a nursery ground about a mile out of town, while the 'All Saints' party as strenuously fought to goal the ball against a distant water-mill wheel. It was the policy of the St. Peter's party to get the ball into the river which leads towards their goal. A man swimming with the floating ball had a good chance of getting it far on its way; but the great struggle was in carrying it across the ground that separated the landing-place and the goal-gate. The brook on which was the water-mill sometimes helped the other party; but so great was the press of players that goals were generally taken by stratagem, very seldom by direct and open kicking. Many amusing stories are told of how wily players have slipped unawares through the strong guard that surrounded the goals and brought victory to their side. Sometimes the shavings were taken out and the cover smuggled in under a smock-frock or a woman's shawl. Once the ball was in the middle of a big scrimmage, where everyone was kicking and no one could see the ball. A cunning fellow outside just then threw his hat over the mass; they saw a dark object, called out 'There it goes,' and dispersed, while he picked up the ball, hid it under his coat, and sauntered to the brook, dropped in the ball, which he did not follow closely but merely kept in view. The goal-keepers saw the mass of players far off, and suspected nothing till the clever fellow slipped past them, jumped into the water, and pushed the ball in triumph against the wheel.

The following day, Ash Wednesday, was the 'Boys' Day,' when the men of both sides attended to see fair play and to decide delicate questions as to whether claimants were small men or great boys. Disputes were much more frequent on this day than on that of the match proper; indeed, it was said that if a cause of quarrel

cropped up on Shrove Tuesday it was by common consent put off for decision on the 'Boys' Day.' This game was, like most others, put down as 'tending to foment quarrels and endanger life.'

The ladies of Derby graced the contest with their presence, and even in some cases of stratagem, as we have seen, with more active assistance; but the fair sex in Inverness went far beyond this, and had an annual match of their own. The married ladies of this parish played the spinsters at football every year, and it is said that the matrons were always victorious—a result which the chronicler of this curious custom declares he must leave to his fair readers to account for.

So much for Shrovetide football, which, however, still lingers among us in its old form in some districts. Thus, last spring, a local newspaper told how the tradesmen of Sedgfield, in Durham, beat the ploughmen at a match played on what the writer called 'probably the thousandth anniversary' of a game exactly like that of Derby.

It is difficult to imagine anything more out of place in the streets of a large town than football; yet for centuries the streets of London were every now and then infested with the players at what Stubbes calls 'a bloody and murdering practice rather than a fellowly sport or pastime.' In Elizabeth's time we find complaints about this. Davenant's Frenchman thus writes of the streets immediately after the Restoration: 'I would now make a safe retreat, but that methinks I am stopped by one of your heroic games called football, which I conceive (under your favour) not very conveniently civil in the streets, especially in such irregular and narrow roads as Crooked Lane.' Pepys, under date January 2, 1664-5, tells us he went 'to my Lord Brouncker's, by appointment, in the Piazza, Covent Garden; the street full of footballs, it being a great frost;' while as late as a century and a half ago along Cheapside or Covent Garden, or by the Maypole in the Strand, rushed the football players.

The 'prentice quits his shop to join the crew,
Increasing crowds the flying game pursue.

Away north on the Border the votaries of the game contrived to annoy their neighbours in perhaps a more serious way. Football there was a very favourite sport; it smacked of the excitement of a real fight; but probably, too, the facilities the gathering gave for making a raid across the Border, or taking some hostile clan by surprise, added a charm to the game in the moss-troopers' eyes. In Border records we find many bloody endings to meetings ostensibly for playing football, as when in 1600 Sir John Carmichael of

Carmichael, the Warden of the Middle Marches, was killed by a band of Armstrongs returning from a football match. Sir Robert Carey, in his 'Memories of Border Transactions,' speaks of a great meeting appointed by the Scottish riders to be held at Kelso for the purpose of playing at football, but which terminated in an incursion into England. Undoubtedly, however, the most notable event in the history of Border football is the famous match played on the plain of Carterhaugh, near the junction of the Ettrick and the Yarrow, on December 4, 1815. The opponents were those old rivals, the 'Souters (*Anglicè*, shoemakers) o' Selkirk' and the Earl of Home with his retainers in the Forest of Yarrow. Lord Home, while at Buccleuch's lodge at Bowhill, challenged Sir Walter Scott, then 'Shirra' of Selkirk, to fight out at football the ancient feud alluded to in the old ballad beginning—

'Tis up wi' the Sutors o' Selkirk,
An' 'tis down wi' the Earl o' Home.

When the eventful Monday arrived, players and spectators poured from all sides into the Carterhaugh; 'the appearance of the various parties,' says Scott, 'marching from their different glens to the place of rendezvous, with pipes playing and loud acclamations, carried back the coldest imagination to the old times when the Forresters assembled with the less peaceable purpose of invading the English territory, or defending their own.' The signal for action was the unfurling of the old banner of the Buccleuch family, which Lady Ann Scott handed to Master Walter Scott, younger, of Abbotsford, then a boy of thirteen, who rode over the field appropriately dressed and with his horse caparisoned with old Border housings, bearing aloft this old relic of an ancient military custom. The Duke of Buccleuch then threw up the ball, and immediately began the tug of war. So numerous were the players, and so closely did they press round the ball, that for long the only indication of play was a heaving here and there of the immense mass until two stalwart 'Flowers of the Forest' got the ball out. One 'chucked' to the other, who at once ran off with it towards the only open side, the woods of Bowhill, intending to make a long circuit and carry it to the Yarrow goal. So fleet of foot was he, that probably he would have succeeded if he had not been ridden down by a man on horseback. So excited were the players, that Lord Home swore if he had had a gun he would have shot the horseman. The tide now turned against the men of the Forest, and after an hour and a half's play a mason of Selkirk gained a goal for his side. Three hours more of fierce struggle brought a goal for Yarrow. Honours being now

equal, and the feelings of the players being up to the fighting point, it was thought advisable not to bring matters to an issue by playing a deciding game. As it was, in the heat of their passion many came to blows, and, as an eyewitness says, 'the ba' had nearly ended in a battle.' Scott tells us that, before they left the ground, he threw up his hat, and, in Lord Dalkeith's name and his own, challenged the Yarrow men, on the part of the Sutors, to a match to be played upon the first convenient opportunity, with a hundred picked men only on each side. Lord Home accepted the challenge; but this match never took place, probably for the reason alluded to in what Scott told Washington Irving two years afterwards at Abbotsford, that 'the old feuds and local interests and rivalries and animosities of the Scotch still slept in their ashes, and might easily be roused; their hereditary feeling for names was still great; it was not always safe to have even the game of football between villages: the old clannish spirit was too apt to break out.'

While Scott took a prominent part on the side of the people of his sheriffdom, the Yarrow men also had their poet. The Ettrick Shepherd acted as aide-de-camp to Lord Home, and both he and Scott wrote verses specially for the occasion. 'The Lifting of the Banner' was Scott's contribution, beginning:—

From the brown crest of Newark its summons extending,
Our signal is waving in smoke and in flame,
And each Forester blythe from his mountain descending,
Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game;
Then up with the Banner! let forest winds fan her!
She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our Fathers before.

James Hogg's poem is also on the old banner of Bellendaine:—

All hail! memorial of the brave,
The liegeman's pride, the Border's awe;
May thy grey pennon never wave
O'er sterner field than Carterhaugh!

Among the Highlanders football was never such a favourite game as 'shinty' and some others, but with their Lowland neighbours in the north-eastern parts of Scotland our game was a prime favourite. Shrovetide and Yule were the times for the chief contests. At the latter festival, the author of 'Notes on Northern Rural Life' tells us, 'three entire days were abstracted from the routine of daily labour and religiously devoted to Yule observances. The requisite "fordel strae" for the cattle had been carefully provided beforehand, so that no flail need be lifted during Yule. In a Presbyterian community there was no formal

religious service of a public sort, and thus there was abundant time for the "ba'in," or any other recreation that might find favour.' The game here was as rough as anywhere else. The Rev. Mr. Skinner, author of 'Tullochgorum,' in a juvenile poem (written in 1737), 'The Monymusk Ba'in,' paints for us the incidents and accompaniments of a big contest in Aberdeenshire, of which this is one stanza:—

Has ne'er in a' this countra been
 Sic shoulderin' an' sic fa'in'
 As happen't but few weeks sinsyne,
 Here at the Christmas ba'in'.
 At evenin' syne the fellows keen
 Drank till the neist day's dawin',
 Sae hard that some tint baith their e'en,
 An' couldna pay their lawin'
 Till the neist day.

It is to be feared the observances in the last lines were looked upon as being quite as important and characteristic of the festival as the 'ba'in' itself.

In the Eastern Counties of England the villagers used to show so much rivalry in their contests at a game called 'camp-ball' that the term 'camping' came to be generally applied to contending in anything. At one time it was held to be doubtful whether the game was football under another name, but Mr. Halliwell has clearly proved by many quotations from old writers that the 'campar' was, as one extract words it, a 'pleyar at foottballe.'

In the North of England, Brand tells us it was customary among the colliers for a party to watch the bridegroom coming out of church after the marriage ceremony in order to demand money for a football, a claim that admitted of no refusal.

On the Continent the causes that have dealt its death-blow to the old style of football among us have been at work too. The fiercely fought football matches of Friburg, Louvain, and many other cities, 'where the contusions would have made some figure in a gazette and where several lives were yearly sacrificed,' are as extinct as the similar contests at home. There was till lately, and may still be, one exception to this: the game of the *sotile*, played in Brittany, which M. Souvestre, in his 'Les derniers Bretons' (Paris, 1836), describes in minute detail. This contest was the last vestige of the worship the Celts paid to the sun, whence the name of the enormous ball of leather, filled with bran, which was used in the match. The fury and rancour with which the game was played are almost past belief. The combatants were the townsman against the rustic, and many a jealous grudge and

little piece of caste feeling rankled in the breasts of the players. M. Souvestre speaks of malicious maimings, of bones broken, and even of murders committed from cherished revenge, but so effected as to appear accidental during the press round the ball when its possession was fought for over the miles that separated the goals. The party that first drove the ball into a township different from that in which the *souïle* was thrown up, won.

The sooner this game follows the Derby and Scone contests into the region of things that were, the better for the fair fame of the capital pastime whose name it disgraces.

ROBERT R. MACGREGOR.

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK I.—CHAPTER V.

A GREAT PERPLEXITY AMONG HONEST PEOPLE.

THOMASIN looked as if quite overcome by her aunt's change of manner. 'It means just what it seems to mean: I am—not married,' she replied with forced calmness; and that this calmness was a hard task for her was merely revealed by the weakness of her tone. 'Excuse me—for humiliating you, aunt, by this mishap: I am sorry for it. But I cannot help it.'

'Me? Think of yourself first.'

'It was nobody's fault. When we got there the parson wouldn't marry us because of some trifling irregularity in the licence.'

'What irregularity?'

'I don't know. Mr. Wildeve can explain. It was very dreadful to think all day how grieved you would be at hearing of it. I did not think when I went away this morning that I should come back like this.' It being dark, Thomasin allowed her emotion to escape her by the silent way of tears, which could roll down her cheek unseen.

'I could almost say that it serves you right—if I did not feel that you don't deserve it,' continued Mrs. Yeobright, who, possessing two distinct moods in close contiguity, a gentle mood and an angry, flew from one to the other without the least warning. 'Remember, Thomasin, this business was none of my seeking; from the very first, when you began to feel foolish about that man, I warned you he would not make you happy. I felt it so strongly that I did what I would never have believed myself capable of doing—stood up in the church, and made myself the public talk for weeks. But having once consented, I don't submit to these fancies without good reason. Marry him you must after this.'

'Do you think I wish to do otherwise for one moment?' said Thomasin, with a heavy sigh. 'I know how wrong it was of me to love him, but don't pain me by talking like that, aunt! You would not have had me stay there with him, would you?—and your house is the only home I have to return to. He says we can be married in a day or two—but I am in your hands.'

'I wish he had never seen you.'

'Very well—then I won't make you the miserablest woman in

the world by letting him see me again. No, you shall make me that, and I won't have him !'

'It is too late to speak like that. Come with me. I am going to the inn to see if he has returned. Of course I shall get to the bottom of this cock-and-bull story at once: Mr. Wildeve must not suppose he can play tricks upon me, or any belonging to me.'

'It was not that. The licence was wrong, and he couldn't get another the same day. He will tell you in a moment how it was if he's come.'

'Why didn't he bring you back?'

'That was me. When I found we could not be married, I didn't like to come back with him, and I was very ill. Then I saw Diggory Venn, and was glad to get him to take me home. I cannot explain it any better, and you must be angry with me if you will.'

'I shall see about that,' said Mrs. Yeobright; and they turned towards the inn, known in the neighbourhood as the Quiet Woman, the sign of which represented the figure of a female carrying her head under her arm. The front of the house was towards the heath and Blackbarrow, whose dark shape seemed to threaten it from the sky. Upon the door was a neglected brass plate, bearing the unexpected inscription, 'Mr. Wildeve, Engineer,'—a useless yet cherished relic from the time when he had been started in that profession in an office at Budmouth by those who had hoped for much from him, and had been disappointed. The garden was at the back, and behind this ran a still deep stream, forming the margin of the heath in this direction, meadow-land appearing beyond the stream.

But the thick obscurity permitted only sky-lines to be visible of any scene at present. The water at the back of the house could be heard, idly spinning whirlpools in its creep between the rows of dry feather-headed reeds which formed a stockade along each bank. Their presence was denoted by sounds as of a congregation praying humbly, produced by their rubbing against each other in the slow wind.

The window, whence the candlelight had shone up the vale to the eyes of the bonfire group, was uncurtained, but the sill lay too high for a pedestrian on the outside to look over it into the room. A vast shadow, in which could be dimly traced portions of a masculine contour, blotted half the ceiling.

'He seems to be at home,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'Must I come in too, aunt?' asked Thomasin faintly. 'I suppose not—it would be wrong?'

'You must come, certainly—to confront him, so that he may

make no false representations to me. We shall not be five minutes in the house; and then we'll walk home.'

Entering the open passage, she tapped at the door of the private parlour, opened it, and looked in.

The back and shoulders of a man came between Mrs. Yeobright's eyes and the fire. Wildeve, whose form it was, immediately turned, arose, and advanced to meet his visitors.

He appeared to have reached the stage of life at which fervour and phlegm, impulse and reflection, balance like a pair of wrestlers, previous to passion's final abandonment of its early sway. In truth, he was about thirty-five; and of the two properties, form and motion, the latter first attracted the eye in him. The grace of his movement was singular: it was the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career. Next came into notice the more material qualities, among which was a profuse crop of hair impending over the top of his face, lending to his forehead the high-cornered outline of an Early Gothic shield; and a neck which was smooth and round as a cylinder. The lower half of his figure was of light build; and altogether he was one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom no woman would have seen anything to dislike.

He discerned the young girl's form in the passage, and said, 'Thomasin, then, has reached home. How could you leave me in that way, darling?' And turning to Mrs. Yeobright: 'It was useless to argue with her. She would go, and go alone.'

'But what's the meaning of it all?' demanded Mrs. Yeobright haughtily.

'Take a seat,' said Wildeve, placing chairs for the two women. 'Well, it was a very stupid mistake, but such mistakes will happen. The licence was useless at Southerton. It was made out for Budmouth, but as I didn't read it I wasn't aware of that.'

'But you had been staying at Southerton?'

'No. I had been at Budmouth—till two days ago—and that was where I had intended to take her; but when I came to fetch her we decided upon Southerton, forgetting that a new licence would be necessary. There was not time to get to Budmouth afterwards.'

'I think you are very much to blame,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'It was quite my fault we chose Southerton,' Thomasin pleaded. 'I proposed it because I was not known there.'

'I know so well that I am to blame, that you need not remind me of it,' replied Wildeve shortly.

'Such things don't happen for nothing,' said the aunt. 'It is a great slight to me and my family; and when it gets known there will be a very unpleasant time for us. There is nothing I hate so much as to be made ridiculous in matters of this kind. How can she look her friends in the face to-morrow? It is a very great injury, and one I cannot easily forgive. It may even reflect on her character.'

'Nonsense!' said Wildeve, with some anger.

Thomasin's large eyes had flown from the face of one to the face of the other during this discussion, and she now said anxiously, 'Will you allow me, aunt, to talk it over alone with Damon for five minutes? Will you, Damon?'

'Certainly, dear,' said Wildeve, 'if your aunt will excuse us.' He led her into an adjoining room, leaving Mrs. Yeobright by the fire.

As soon as they were alone and the door closed Thomasin said, turning up her pale tearful face to him, 'It is killing me, this, Damon. I did not mean to part from you in anger at Southerton this morning; but I was frightened, and hardly knew what I said. I do not let aunt know how much I have suffered to-day; and it is so hard to command my face and voice, and to smile as if it were a slight thing to me; but I try to do so, that she may not be still more indignant with you. I know you could not help it, dear, whatever aunt may think.'

'She is very unpleasant.'

'Yes,' she murmured, 'and I suppose I seem so now. . . . Damon, what do you mean to do about me?'

'Do about you?'

'Yes. Those who don't like you whisper things which at moments make me doubt you. We mean to marry, I suppose, don't we?'

'Of course we do. We have only to go to Budmouth on Monday, and we may marry at once.'

'Then do let us go!—Oh Damon, what you make me say!' She hid her blushing face in her handkerchief. 'Here am I, asking you to marry me; when by rights you ought to be on your knees imploring me, your cruel mistress, not to refuse you, and saying it would break your heart if I did. I used to think it would be pretty and sweet like that; but how different!'

'Yes, real life is never at all like that.'

'But I don't care personally if it never takes place,' she added, with a little dignity; 'no, I can live without you. It is aunt I *think of*. She is so proud, and thinks so much of her family respectability, that she will be cut down with mortification if this

story should get abroad before—it is done. My cousin Clym, too, will be much wounded.'

'Then he will be very unreasonable. In fact, you are all rather unreasonable.'

Thomasin coloured a little, and not with love. But whatever the momentary feeling which caused that flush in her, it went as it came, and she quietly said, 'I never mean to be, if I can help it. I merely feel that you have my aunt to some extent in your power at last.'

'As a matter of justice it is almost due to me,' said Wildeve. 'Think what I have gone through to win her consent; the insult that it is to any man to have the banns forbidden; the double insult to a man unlucky enough to be cursed with sensitiveness, and blue demons, and Heaven knows what, as I am. I can never forget those banns. A harsher man would rejoice now in the power I have of turning upon your aunt by going no further in the business.'

She looked wistfully at him with her sorrowful eyes as he said those words, and her aspect showed that more than one person in the room could deplore the possession of sensitiveness. Seeing that she was really suffering, he seemed disturbed and added, 'This is merely a reflection, you know. I have not the least intention to refuse to complete the marriage, Tamsie mine—I could not bear it.'

'You could not, I know,' said the fair girl, brightening. 'You, who cannot bear the sight of pain in even an insect, or any disagreeable sound, or unpleasant smell even, will not long cause pain to me and mine.'

'I will not, if I can help it.'

'Your hand upon it, Damon.'

He carelessly gave her his hand.

'Ah, by my crown, what's that?' he said suddenly.

There fell upon their ears the sound of numerous voices singing in front of the house. Among these, two made themselves prominent by their peculiarity: one was a very strong bass, the other a wheezy thin piping. Thomasin recognised them as belonging to Timothy Fairway and Grandfer Cattle respectively.

'What does it mean?—it is not skimmity-riding, I hope?' she said, with a frightened gaze at Wildeve.

'Of course not; no, it is that the heath-folk have come to sing us a welcome. This is intolerable!' He began pacing about, the men outside singing cheerily:—

He told' her that she' was the joy' of his life',
And if' she'd con-sent' he would make' her his wife';

She could' not re-fuse' him; to church' so they went;
Young Will' was for-got', and young Sue' was con-tent';
And then' was she kiss'd' and set down' on his knee',
No man' in the world' was so lov'-ing as he'!

Mrs. Yeobright burst in from the outer room. 'Thomasin, Thomasin!' she said, looking indignantly at Wildeve; 'here's a pretty exposure! let us escape at once. Come!'

It was, however, too late to get away by the passage. A rugged knocking had begun upon the door of the front room. Wildeve, who had gone to the window, came back.

'Stop!' he said imperiously, putting his hand upon Mrs. Yeobright's arm. 'We are regularly besieged. There are fifty of them out there if there's one. You stay in this room with Thomasin; I'll go out and face them. You must stay now, for my sake, till they are gone, so that it may seem as if all was right. Come, Tamsie, dear, don't go making a scene—we must marry after this; that you can see as well as I. Sit still, that's all—and don't speak much. I'll manage them. Blundering fools!'

He pressed the agitated girl into a seat, returned to the outer room, and opened the door. Immediately outside, in the passage, appeared Grandfer Cantle singing in concert with those still standing in front of the house. He came into the room and nodded abstractedly to Wildeve, his lips still remaining parted, and his features excruciatingly strained in the emission of the chorus. This being ended, he drew breath and said heartily, 'Here's welcome to the new-made couple, and God bless 'em!'

'Thank you,' said Wildeve, with dry resentment, his face as gloomy as a thunderstorm.

At the Grandfer's heels now came the rest of the group, which included Fairway, Christian, Sam the turf-cutter, Humphrey, and one or two others. All smiled upon Wildeve, and upon his tables and chairs likewise, from a general sense of friendliness towards the articles as well as towards their owner.

'We be not here afore Mrs. Yeobright after all,' said Fairway, recognising the matron's bonnet through the glass partition which divided the public apartment they had entered from the inner room where the women sat. 'We struck down across, d'ye see, Mr. Wildeve, and she went round by the road.'

'And I see the young one's little head!' said Grandfer Cantle, peeping in the same direction, and discerning Thomasin, who was waiting beside her aunt in a miserable and awkward way. 'Not quite settled down yet—well, well, there's plenty of time.'

Wildeve made no reply; and probably feeling that the sooner

he treated them the sooner they would go, he produced a stone jar, which threw a warm halo over matters at once.

'That's a drop of the right sort, I can see,' said Grandfer Cantle, with the air of a man too well-mannered to show any hurry to taste it.

'Yes,' said Wildeve, 'tis some old mead. I hope you will like it.'

'O ay,' replied the guests in the hearty tones natural when the words demanded by politeness coincide with those of deepest feeling. 'There isn't a prettier drink under the sun.'

'I'll take my oath there isn't,' added Grandfer Cantle. 'All that can be said against mead is that 'tis rather heady, and apt to lie about a man a good while. But to-morrow's Sunday, thank God.'

'I feel'd for all the world like some bold soldier after I had had some once,' said Christian.

'You shall feel so again,' said Wildeve, with condescension. 'Cups or glasses, gentlemen?'

'Well, if you don't mind, we'll have the beaker, and pass en round: 'tis better than heling it out in dribbles.'

'Jown the slippery glasses!' said Grandfer Cantle. 'What's the good of a thing that you can't put down in the ashes to warm, hey, neighbours? that's what I ask.'

'Right, Grandfer,' said Sam; and the mead then circulated.

'Well,' said Timothy Fairway, feeling demands upon his praise in some form or other, 'tis a worthy thing to be married, Mr. Wildeve; and the woman you've got is a dimant, so says I. Yes,' he continued, to Grandfer Cantle, raising his voice so as to be heard through the partition; 'her father [inclining his head towards the inner room] was as good a feller as ever lived. He always had his great indignation ready against anything underhand.'

'Is that sort of firearm very dangerous?' said Christian.

'And there were few in these parts that were up-sides with him,' said Sam. 'Whenever a club walked he'd play the clarinet in the band that marched before 'em as if he'd never touched anything but a clarinet all his life. And then, when they got to church-door, he'd throw down the clarinet, mount the gallery, snatch up the bass-viol, and rozum away as if he'd never played anything but a bass-viol. Folk would say—folk that knowed what a true stave was—surely, surely that's never the same man that I seed handling the clarinet so masterly by now!'

'I can mind it,' said the furze-cutter. 'Twas a wonderful thing that one body could hold it all and never mix the fingering.'

'There was Flychett church likewise,' Fairway recommenced, *as one opening a new vein of the same mine of interest.*

Wildeve breathed the breath of one intolerably bored, and glanced through the partition at the prisoners.

'He used to walk over there of a Sunday afternoon to visit his old acquaintance Andrew Brown, the first clarinet there; a good man enough, but rather screechy in his music, if you can mind?'

'A was.'

'And neighbour Yeobright would take Andrey's place for some part of the service, to let Andrey have a bit of a nap, as any friend would naturally do.'

'As any friend would,' said Grandfer Cattle, the other listeners expressing the same accord by the shorter way of nodding their heads.

'No sooner was Andrey asleep and the first whiff of neighbour Yeobright's wind had got inside Andrey's clarinet, than everyone in church feelled in a moment there was a great soul among 'em. All heads would turn, and they'd say, "Ah, I thought 'twas he!" One Sunday I can well mind—a bass-viol day that time, and Yeobright had brought his own. 'Twas the Hundred-and-thirty-third to "Lydia"; and when they'd come to, "Ran down his beard and o'er his robes its costly moisture shed," neighbour Yeobright, who had just warmed to his work, drove his bow into them strings that glorious grand that he e'en a'most sawed the bass-viol into two pieces. Every winder in church rattled as if 'twere a thunder-storm. Old Passon Gibbons lifted his hands in his great white surplice as natural as if he'd been in human clothes, and seemed to say to himself, "O for such a man in our parish!" But not a soul in Flychett could hold a candle to Yeobright.'

'Was it quite safe when the winders shook?' Christian inquired.

He received no answer; all for the moment sitting wrapt in admiration of the performance described. As with Farinelli's singing before the princesses, Sheridan's renowned Begum Speech, and other such examples, the fortunate condition of its being for ever lost to the world invested the deceased Mr. Yeobright's *tour de force* on that memorable afternoon with a cumulative glory which comparative criticism, had that been possible, might considerably have shorn down.

'He was the last you'd have expected to drop off in the prime of life,' said Humphrey the furze-cutter.

'Ah, well: he was looking for the earth some months afore he went. At that time women used to run for smocks and gown-pieces at Greenhill Fair, and my wife that is now, being a long-legged slithering maid not quite husband-high, went with the rest

of the maidens, for 'a was a good runner afore she got so heavy. When she came home I said—we were then just beginning to walk together—"What have ye got, my honey?" "I've won—well, I've won—a gown-piece," says she, her colours coming up in a moment. 'Tis t'other thing for a crown, I thought; and so it turned out. Ay, when I think what she'll say to me now without a mossel of red in her face, it do seem strange that 'a wouldn't say such a little thing then. . . However, then she went on, and that's what made me bring up the story, "Well, whatever clothes I've won, white or figured, for eyes to see or for eyes not to see," ('a could do a pretty stroke of modesty in those days), "I'd sooner have lost it than have seed what I have. Poor Mr. Yeobright was took ill directly he reached the fair ground, and was forced to go home again." That was the last time he ever went out of the parish.'

'A faltered on from one day to another, and then we heard he was gone.'

'D'ye think he had great pain when 'a died?' said Christian.

'O no: quite different. Nor any pain of mind. He was lucky enough to be God A'mighty's own man.'

'And other folk—d'ye think 'twill be much pain to 'em, Master Fairway?'

'That depends on whether they be afeard.'

'I baint afeard at all, I thank God!' said Christian strenuously. 'I'm glad I baint, for then 'twont pain me. . . I don't think I be afeard—or if I be I can't help it, and I don't deserve to suffer. I wish I was not afeard at all.'

There was a solemn silence, and looking from the window, which was unshuttered and unblinded, Timothy said, 'Well, what a fess little bonfire that one is, out by Cap'n Drew's! 'Tis burning just the same now as ever, upon my life.'

All glances went through the window, and nobody noticed that Wildeve disguised a brief, tell-tale look. Far away up the sombre valley of heath, and to the right of Blackbarrow, could indeed be seen the light, small, but steady and persistent as before.

'It was lighted before ours was,' Fairway continued; 'and yet every one in the country round is out afore 'n.'

'Perhaps there's meaning in it!' murmured Christian.

'How meaning?' said Wildeve sharply.

Christian was too scattered to reply, and Timothy helped him.

'He means, sir, that the lonesome dark-eyed creature up there that some say is a witch—ever I should call a fine young woman such a name!—is always up to some odd conceit or other; and so perhaps 'tis she.'

‘I’d be very glad to ask her in wedlock, if she’d hae me, and take the risk of her wild dark eyes ill-wishing me,’ said Grandfer Cantle staunchly.

‘Don’t ye say it, father!’ implored Christian.

‘Well, be dazed if he who do marry the maid won’t hae an uncommon picture for his best parlour,’ said Fairway in a liquid tone, placing down the cup of mead at the end of a good pull.

‘And a partner as deep as the North Star,’ said Sam, taking up the cup and finishing the little that remained.

‘Well, really, now I think we must be moving,’ said Humphrey, observing the emptiness of the vessel.

‘But we’ll gie ’em another song?’ said Grandfer Cantle. ‘I’m as full of notes as a bird.’

‘Thank you, Grandfer,’ said Wildev. ‘But we will not trouble you now. Some other day must do for that—when I have a party.’

‘Be jown’d if I don’t learn ten new songs for’t, or I won’t learn a line,’ said Grandfer Cantle. ‘And you may be sure I won’t disappoint ye by biding away, Mr. Wildev.’

‘I quite believe you,’ said that gentleman.

All then took their leave, wishing their entertainer long life and happiness as a married man, with recapitulations which occupied some time. Wildev attended them to the door, beyond which the deep-dyed upward stretch of heath stood awaiting them, an amplitude of darkness reigning from their feet almost to the zenith, where a definite form first became visible in the lowering forehead of Blackbarrow. Diving into the dense obscurity in a line headed by Sam the turf-cutter, they pursued their trackless way home.

When the scratching of the furze against their leggings had fainted upon the ear, Wildev returned to the room where he had left Thomasin and her aunt. The women were gone.

They could only have left the house in one way, by the back window; and this was open.

Wildev laughed to himself, remained a moment thinking, and idly returned to the front room. Here his glance fell upon a bottle of wine which stood on the mantelpiece. ‘Ah—old Dowden!’ he murmured; and going to the kitchen door shouted, ‘Is anybody here who can take something to old Dowden?’

There was no reply. The room was empty, the lad who acted as his factotum having gone to bed. Wildev came back, put on *his hat*, took the bottle, and left the house, turning the key in the door, for there was no guest at the inn to-night. As soon as he was on the road the little bonfire on Mistover Knap again met his eye.

‘Still waiting, are you, my lady!’ he murmured.

However, he did not proceed that way just then; but leaving the hill to the left of him, stumbled along over a rutted road that brought him to a cottage which, like all other habitations on the heath at this hour, was only saved from being invisible by a faint shine from its bedroom window. This house was the home of Olly Dowden, the besom-maker, and he entered.

The lower room was in darkness; but by feeling his way he found a table, whereon he placed the bottle, and a minute later emerged again upon the heath. He stood and looked northwards at the undying little fire—high up above him, though not so high as Blackbarrow. It was the same which had attracted so much attention among the other men that night, through being the longest lasting of all the bonfires in the Egdon district.

We have been told what happens when a woman deliberates; and the epigram is not always terminable with woman, provided that one be in the case, and that a fair one. Wildeva stood, and stood longer, and breathed perplexedly, and then said to himself with resignation, ‘Yes—by Heaven, I must go to her, I suppose!’

Instead of turning in the direction of home, he pressed on rapidly by a path near Blackbarrow towards what was evidently a signal light.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD CHORDS ARE EFFECTIVELY TOUCHED.

WHEN the whole Egdon conclave had left the site of the bonfire to its accustomed loneliness, a closely-wrapped female figure approached the barrow from that quarter of the heath in which the little fire lay. Had the reddleman been watching, he might have recognised her as the woman who had first stood there so singularly, and vanished at the approach of strangers. She ascended to her old position at the top, where the red coals of the perishing fire greeted her like living eyes in the corpse of day. There she stood still, around her stretching the vast night atmosphere, whose incomplete darkness in comparison with the total darkness of the heath below it might have represented a mortal beside a venial sin.

That she was tall and straight in build, that she was lady-like in her movements, was all that could be learnt of her just now, her form being wrapped in a shawl folded in the old cornerwise fashion, and her head in a large kerchief—a protection not super-

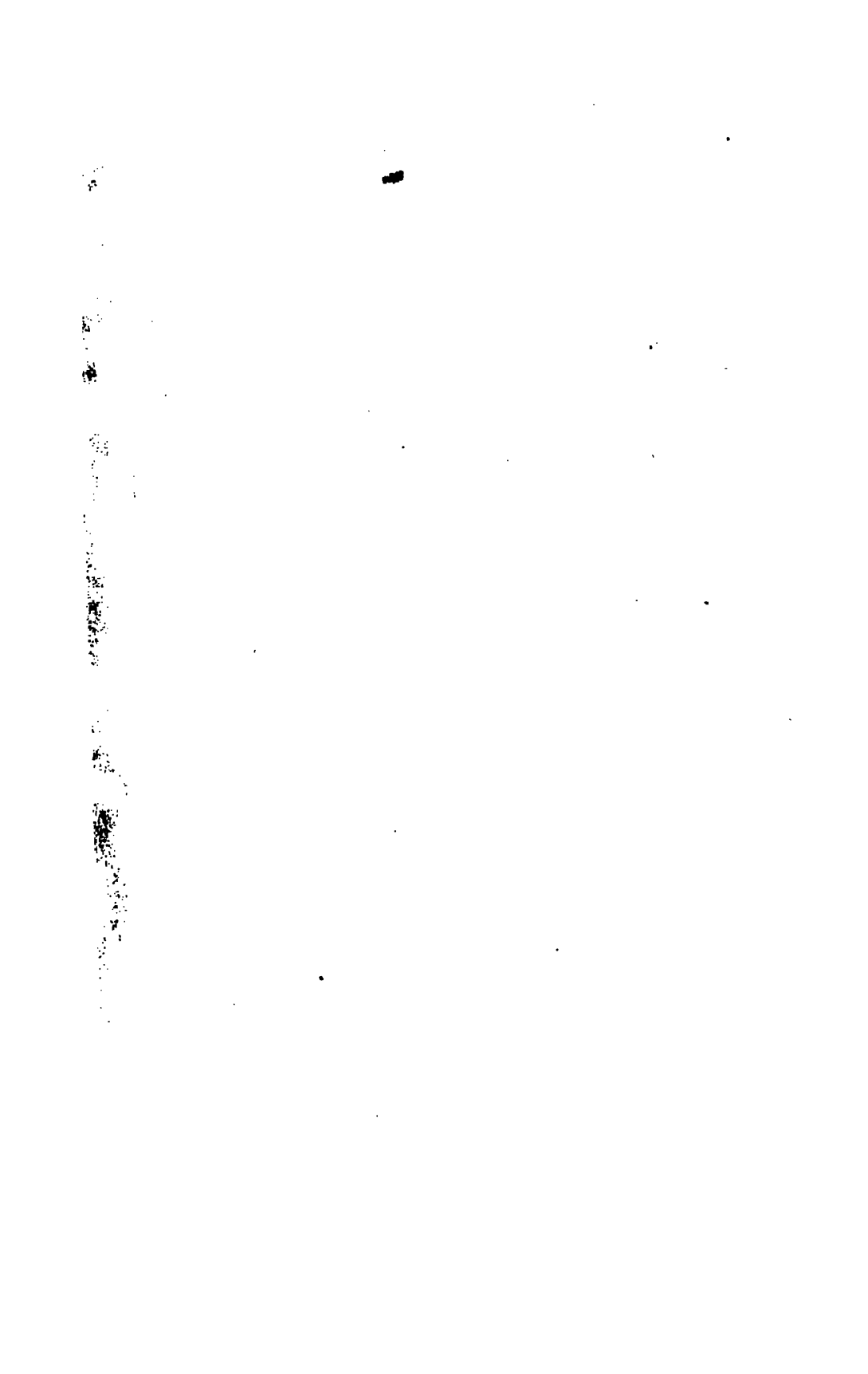
fluuous at this hour and place. Her back was towards the wind, which blew from the south-west; but whether she had adopted that aspect because of the chilly gusts which played about her exceptional position, or because her interest lay in the north-east, did not at first appear.

Her reason for standing so dead still as the pivot of this circle of heath-country was just as obscure. Her extraordinary fixity, her conspicuous loneliness, her heedlessness of night, betokened among other things an utter absence of fear. A tract of country unaltered from that sinister condition which made Cæsar anxious every year to get clear of its glooms before the autumnal equinox, a kind of landscape and weather which leads travellers from the South to continually describe our island as Homer's Cimmerian land, was not, on the face of it, friendly to woman.

It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night advanced, and laid hold of the attention. The wind, indeed, seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else. Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the south-west like antelopes; and when each one of them raced past, the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the barytone buzz of a holly tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch, a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune, which was the peculiar local sound alluded to. Thinner and less immediately traceable than the other two, it was far more impressive than either. In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off a heath, it afforded a shadow of a reason for the woman's tenseness, which continued as unbroken as ever.

Throughout the blowing of these plaintive November winds, that note bore a great resemblance to the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore-and-ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear that, by the accustomed, the material minutiae in which it originated could be realized as by touch. It was the united products of infinitesimal vegetable causes, and these were neither stems nor twigs, neither leaves nor fruit, neither blades nor prickles, neither lichen nor moss.

They were the mummied heath-bells of the past summer, originally tender and purple, now washed colourless by Michaelmas rains, and dried to dead skins by October sun. So low was an individual





sound from these, that a combination of hundreds only just emerged from silence, and the myriads of the whole declivity reached the woman's ear but as a shrivelled and intermittent recitative. Yet scarcely a single accent among the many afloat to-night could have such power to impress a listener with thoughts of its origin. One inwardly saw the infinity of those combined multitudes: one perceived that each of the tiny trumpets was seized on, entered, scoured, and emerged from by the wind as thoroughly as if it were as vast as a crater.

'The spirit moved them.' A meaning of the phrase forced itself upon the attention; and an emotional listener's fetichistic mood might have ended in one of more advanced quality. It was not, after all, that the left-hand expanse of old blooms spoke, or the right-hand, or those of the slope in front. It was the single person of something else speaking through each in turn.

Suddenly, on the barrow, there mingled with all this wild rhetoric of night a sound which modulated so naturally into the rest that its beginning and ending were hardly to be distinguished. The bluffs had broken silence, the bushes had broken silence, the heather-bells had broken silence; at last, so did the woman; and her articulation was but as another line of the same discourse as theirs. Thrown out on the winds, it became twined in with them, and with them it flew away.

What she uttered was a lengthened sighing, apparently at something in her mind which had led to her presence here. There was a spasmodic abandonment about it, as if, in allowing herself to utter the sound, the woman's brain had authorized what it could not regulate. One point was evident in this: she had been existing in a suppressed state, and not in one of languor or stagnation.

Far away down the valley the faint shine from the window of the inn still lasted on; and a few additional moments proved that the window, or what was within it, had more to do with the woman's sigh than had either her own actions or the scene immediately around. She lifted her left hand, and revealed that it held a closed telescope. This she rapidly extended, as if she were well accustomed to the operation, and raising it to her eye directed it exactly towards the light beaming from the inn.

The kerchief which had hooded her head was now a little thrown back, her face being somewhat elevated. A profile was visible against the dull monochrome of cloud around her; and it was as though side-shadows from the features of Marie Antoinette and Lord Byron had converged upwards from the tomb to form an image like neither but suggesting both. This, however, was mere

superficiality. In respect of character, a face may make certain admissions by its outline; but it fully confesses only in its changes. So much is this the case, that what is called the play of the features often helps more in understanding a man or woman than the earnest labours of all their other members together. Thus the night revealed little of her whose form it was embracing, for the mobile parts of her countenance could not be seen.

At last she gave up her spying attitude, closed the telescope, and turned to the decaying embers. From these no appreciable beams now radiated, except when a more than usually smart gust brushed over their faces and raised a fitful glow which came and went like the blush of a girl. She stooped over the silent circle, and, selecting from the brands a piece of stick which bore the largest live coal at its end, brought it to where she had been standing before.

She held the brand to the ground, blowing the red coal with her mouth at the same time. It faintly illuminated the sod, and revealed a small object. The object was an hourglass. She blew long enough to show that the sand had all slipped through.

‘Ah!’ she said, as if surprised.

The light raised by her breath had been very precarious, and a momentary irradiation of flesh was all that it had disclosed of her face. That consisted of two matchless lips and a cheek only, her head being still enveloped. She threw away the stick, took the glass in her hand, the telescope under her arm, and moved on.

Along the ridge ran a faint foot-track, which the lady followed. Those who knew it well called it a path; and, while a mere visitor would have passed it unnoticed even by day, the regular haunters of the heath were at no loss for it at midnight. The whole secret of following these incipient paths, when there was not light enough in the atmosphere to show a turnpike-road, lay in the development of the sense of touch in the feet, which comes with years of night-rambling in little-trodden spots. To a walker practised in such places, a difference between impact on maiden herbage, and on the crippled stalks of a slight footway, is perceptible through the thickest boot or shoe.

The solitary figure who walked this beat took notice of the windy tune still played on the dead heath-bells. She did not turn her head to look at a group of dark creatures further on, who fled from her presence as she skirted a ravine where they fed. They were about a score of the small wild ponies known as heath-croppers. They roamed at large on the undulations of Egdon, but in numbers too few to detract much from the solitude.

The pedestrian noticed nothing just now, and a clue to her ab-

straction was afforded by a trivial incident. A bramble caught hold of her skirt, and checked her progress. Instead of putting it off and hastening along, she yielded herself up to the pull, and stood passively still. When she began to extricate herself, it was by turning round and round on her axis, and so unwinding the prickly switch. She was in a desponding reverie.

Her course was in the direction of the small undying fire which had drawn the attention of the men on Blackbarrow and of Wildeve in the valley below. A faint illumination from its rays began to grow upon her face, and it increased in definiteness as she drew nearer. The fire soon revealed itself to be kindled, not on the level ground, but on a salient corner or redan of earth, arising from the junction of two converging bank fences. Outside was a ditch, dry except immediately under the fire, where there was a pool, bearded all round by heather and rushes. In the smooth water of the pool the fire appeared upside down.

The banks meeting behind were bare of a hedge, save such as was formed by disconnected tufts of furze, standing upon stems along the top, like impaled heads above a city wall. A white mast, fitted up with spars and other nautical tackle, could be seen rising against the dark clouds whenever the flames played brightly enough to reach it. Altogether the scene had much the appearance of a fortification upon which had been kindled a beacon fire.

Nobody was visible; but ever and anon a whitish something moved above the bank from behind, and vanished again. Close watching would have shown it to be a small human hand, in the act of lifting pieces of fuel into the fire; but, for all that could be seen, the hand, like that which troubled Belshazzar, was there alone. Occasionally an ember rolled off the bank, and dropped with a hiss into the pool.

At one side of the pool, rough steps built of clods enabled anyone who wished to do so to mount the bank; and this the woman did. Within was a paddock in an uncultivated state, though bearing evidence of having once been tilled; but the heath and fern had insidiously crept in, and were reasserting their old supremacy. Further ahead were dimly visible an irregular dwelling-house, garden, and outbuildings, backed by a clump of firs.

The young lady—for youth had revealed its presence in her buoyant bound up the bank—walked along the top instead of descending inside, and came to the corner where the fire was burning. One reason for the permanence of the blaze was now manifest: the fuel consisted of hard pieces of wood, cleft and sawn—the knotty boles of old thorn-trees which grew in twos and threes about the hill-sides. A yet unconsumed pile of these lay in the

inner angle of the bank; and from this corner the upturned face of a little boy greeted her eyes. He was dilatorily throwing up a piece of wood into the fire every now and then, an act which seemed to have engaged him a considerable part of the evening, for his face was somewhat weary.

‘I am glad you have come, Miss Eustacia,’ he said, with a sigh of relief. ‘I don’t like biding by myself.’

‘Nonsense! I have only been a little way for a walk. I have been gone only twenty minutes.’

‘It seemed long,’ murmured the sad boy. ‘And you have been so many times.’

‘Why, I thought you would be pleased to have a bonfire. Are you not much obliged to me for making you one?’

‘Yes; but there’s nobody here to play wi’ me.’

‘I suppose nobody has come while I’ve been away?’

‘Nobody except your grandfather: he looked out of doors once for ’ee. I told him you were walking round upon the hill to look at the other bonfires.’

‘A good boy!’

‘I think I hear him coming again, miss.’

An old man came into the remoter light of the fire from the direction of the homestead. He was the same who had overtaken the reddleman on the road that afternoon. He looked wistfully to the top of the bank at the woman who stood there, and his teeth, which were quite unimpaired, showed like parian from his parted lips.

‘When are you coming indoors, Eustacia?’ he asked. ‘’Tis almost bed-time. I’ve been home these two hours, and am tired out. Surely ’tis somewhat childish of you to stay out playing at bonfires so long, and wasting such fuel. My precious thorn roots, the rarest of all firing, that I laid by on purpose for Christmas—you have burnt ’em nearly all!’

‘I promised Johnny a bonfire, and it pleases him not to let it go out just yet,’ said Eustacia, in a way which told at once that she was absolute queen here. ‘Grandfather, you go in to bed. I shall follow you soon. You like the fire, don’t you, Johnny?’

The boy looked up doubtfully at her and murmured, ‘I don’t think I want it any longer.’

Her grandfather had turned back again, and did not hear the boy’s reply. As soon as the white-haired man had vanished she said in a tone of pique to the child, ‘Ungrateful little boy, how can you contradict me? Never shall you have a bonfire again unless you keep it up now. Come, tell me you like to do things for me, and don’t deny it.’

The repressed child said, 'Yes, I do,' and continued to stir the fire perfunctorily.

'Stay a little longer, and I will give you a crooked sixpence,' said Eustacia, more gently. 'Put in one piece of wood every two or three minutes, but not too much at once. I am going to walk along the ridge a little longer, but I shall keep on coming to you. And if you hear a frog jump into the pond with a flounce, like a stone thrown in, be sure you run and tell me, because it is a sign of rain.'

'Yes, Eustacia.'

'Miss Vye, sir.'

'Miss Vy—stacia.'

'That will do. Now put in one stick more.'

The little slave went on feeding the fire as before. He seemed a mere automaton, galvanized into moving and speaking by the wayward Eustacia's will. He might have been the brass statue which Albertus Magnus is said to have animated just so far as to make it chatter, and move, and be his servant.

Before going on her walk again, the young girl stood still on the bank for a few instants and listened. It was to the full as lonely a place as Blackbarrow, though at rather a lower level; and it was more sheltered from wind and weather, on account of the few firs to the north. The bank enclosed the whole homestead, and well protected it from the lawless state of the world without; it was formed of thick square clods, dug from the ditch on the outside, and built up with a slight batter or incline, which forms no slight defence where hedges will not grow because of the wind and the wildness, and where wall materials are unattainable. Otherwise the situation was quite open, commanding the whole length of the valley which reached to the river behind Wildeve's house. High above this to the right, and much nearer hitherward than the Quiet Woman Inn, the blurred contour of Blackbarrow obstructed the sky.

After her attentive survey of the wild slopes and hollow ravines, a gesture of impatience escaped Eustacia. She vented petulant words every now and then; but there were sighs between her words, and sudden listenings between her sighs. Descending from her perch, she again sauntered off towards Blackbarrow, though this time she did not go the whole way.

Twice she reappeared at intervals of a few minutes, and each time she said:

'Not any flounce into the pond yet, little man?'

'No, Miss Eustacia,' the child replied.

‘Well,’ she said at last, ‘I shall soon be going in; and then I will give you the crooked sixpence, and let you go home.’

‘Thank’ee, Miss Eustacia,’ said the tired stoker, breathing more easefully. And Eustacia again strolled away from the fire; but this time not towards Blackbarrow. She skirted the bank, and went round to the wicket before the house, where she stood motionless, looking at the scene.

Fifty yards off rose the corner of the two converging banks, with the fire upon it: within the bank, lifting up to the fire one stick at a time, just as before, the figure of the little child. She idly watched him as he occasionally climbed up in the nook of the bank and stood beside the brands. The wind blew the smoke, and the child’s hair, and the corner of his pinafore, all in the same direction: the breeze died, and the pinafore and hair lay still, and the smoke went up straight.

While Eustacia looked on from this distance the boy’s form visibly started: he slid down the bank and ran across towards the white gate.

‘Well?’ said Eustacia.

‘A hop-frog have jumped into the pond. Yes, I heard en!’

‘Then it is going to rain, and you had better go home. You will not be afraid?’ She spoke hurriedly, as if her heart had leapt into her throat at the boy’s words.

‘No, because I shall hae the crooked sixpence.’

‘Yes: here it is. Now run as fast as you can—not that way—through the garden here. No other boy in the heath has had such a bonfire as yours.’

The boy, who had clearly had too much of a good thing, marched away into the shadows with alacrity. When he was gone, Eustacia, leaving her telescope and hourglass by the gate, brushed forward from the wicket towards the angle of the bank, under the fire.

Here, screened by the outwork, she waited. In a few moments a splash was audible from the pond outside. Had the child been there, he would have said that a second frog had jumped in; but by most people the sound would have been likened to the fall of a stone into the water. Eustacia stepped upon the bank.

‘Yes?’ she said, and held her breath.

Thereupon the contour of a man became dimly visible against the low-reaching sky over the valley, beyond the outer margin of the pool. He came round it, and leapt upon the bank beside her. She laughed low. It was the third utterance which the girl had indulged in to-night. The first, when she stood upon Blackbarrow, had expressed anxiety; the second, on the ridge, had expressed impatience; the present was one of triumphant pleasure.

She let her joyous eyes rest upon him without speaking, as upon some wondrous thing she had created out of chaos.

‘I have come,’ said the man, who was no other than Wildeve. ‘You give me no peace. Why do you not leave me alone? I have seen your bonfire all the evening.’ The words were not without emotion, and retained their level tone as if by careful equipoise between imminent extremes.

At this unexpectedly repressing manner in her lover, the girl seemed to repress herself also. ‘Of course you have seen my fire,’ she answered with languid calmness artificially maintained. ‘Why shouldn’t I have a bonfire on the fifth of November, like other denizens of the heath?’

‘I knew it was meant for me.’

‘How did you know it? I have had no word with you since you—you chose her, and walked about with her, and deserted me entirely, as if I had never been yours.’

‘Eustacia! could I forget that last autumn, at this same day of the month, and at this same place, you lighted exactly such a fire as a signal for me to come and see you? Why should there have been a bonfire again by Captain Drew’s house, if not for the same purpose?’

‘Yes, yes—I own it,’ she cried under her breath, with a drowsy fervour of manner and tone which was quite peculiar to her. ‘Don’t begin speaking to me as you did, Damon; you will drive me to say words I would not wish to say to you. I had given you up, and resolved not to think of you any more; and then I heard the news, and I came out and got the fire ready because I thought you had been faithful to me.’

‘What have you heard to make you think that?’ said Wildeve, astonished.

‘That you did not marry her,’ she murmured exultingly. ‘And I knew it was because you loved me best, and couldn’t do it. . . . Damon, you have been cruel to me to go away, and I have said I would never forgive you. I do not think I can forgive you entirely, even now—it is too much for a woman of any spirit to quite overlook.’

‘If I had known you wished to call me up here only to reproach me, I wouldn’t have come.’

‘But I don’t mind it, and I do forgive you now that you have not married her, and have come back to me!’

‘Who told you that I had not married her?’

‘My grandfather. He took a long walk to-day, and as he was coming home he overtook some person who told him of a broken-off wedding: he thought it might be yours; and I knew it was.’

‘Does anybody else know?’

‘I suppose not. Now, Damon, do you see why I lit my signal fire? You did not think I would have lit it if I had imagined you to have become the husband of this woman. It is insulting my pride to suppose that.’ Wildeva was silent: it was evident that he had supposed as much.

‘Did you indeed think I believed you were married?’ she again demanded earnestly. ‘Then you wronged me; and upon my life and heart I can hardly bear to recognise that you have such ill thoughts of me! Damon, you are not worthy of me: I see it, and yet I love you. Never mind: let it go—I must bear your mean opinion as best I may. . . It is true, is it not,’ she added, with ill-concealed anxiety, on his making no demonstration, ‘that you could not bring yourself to give me up, and are still going to love me best of all?’

‘Yes; or why should I have come?’ he said touchily. ‘Not that fidelity will be any great merit in me after your kind speech about my unworthiness, which should have been said by myself if by anybody, and comes with an ill grace from you. However, the curse of inflammability is upon me, and I must live under it, and take any snub from a woman. It has brought me down from engineering to innkeeping: what lower stage it has in store for me I have yet to learn.’ He continued to look upon her gloomily.

She seized the moment, and throwing back the shawl so that the fire-light shone full upon her face and throat, said, with a majestic smile, ‘Have you ever seen anything better than that in your travels?’

Eustacia was not one to commit herself to such a position without good ground. He said quietly, ‘No.’

‘Not even on the shoulders of Thomasin?’

‘Thomasin is a pleasing and innocent woman.’

‘That’s nothing to do with it,’ she cried with quick passionate-ness. ‘We will leave her out: there are only you and me now to think of.’ After a long look at him, she resumed, with the old quiescent warmth: ‘Must I go on weakly confessing to you things a woman ought to conceal; and own that no words can express how gloomy I have been because of that dreadful belief I held till two hours ago—that you had quite deserted me?’

‘I am sorry I caused you that pain.’

‘But perhaps it is not wholly because of you that I get gloomy,’ she archly added. ‘It is in my nature to feel like that. It was born in my blood, I suppose.’

‘Hypochondriasis.’

‘Or else it was coming into this wild heath. I was happy

enough at Budmouth. O the times, O the days at Budmouth! But Egdon will be brighter again now.'

'I hope it will,' said Wildeve moodily. 'Do you know the consequence of this recall of me, my old darling? I shall come to see you again as before, at Blackbarrow.'

'Of course you will.'

'And yet I declare that until I got here to-night I intended, after this one good-bye, never to meet you again.'

'I don't thank you for that,' she said, turning away, while an inner indignation spread through her like subterranean heat. 'You may come again to Blackbarrow if you like, but you won't see me; and you may call, but I shall not listen; and you may tempt me, but I won't encourage you any more.'

'You have said as much before, sweet; but such natures as yours don't so easily adhere to their words. Neither, for the matter of that, do such natures as mine.'

'This is the pleasure I have won by my trouble!' she whispered bitterly, half to herself. 'Why did I try to recall you? Damon, a strange warring takes place in my mind occasionally. I think, when I become calm after your woundings, "Do I embrace a cloud of common fog, after all?" You are a chameleon, and now you are at your worst colour. Go home, or I shall hate you!'

He looked absently towards Blackbarrow while one might have counted twenty, and said, as if he did not much mind all this: 'Yes, I will go home. Do you mean to see me again?'

'If you own to me that the wedding is broken off because you love me best.'

'I don't think it would be good policy,' said Wildeve, smiling. 'You would get to know the extent of your power too clearly.'

'But tell me!'

'You know.'

'Where is she now?'

'I don't know. I prefer not to speak of her to you. I have not yet married her: I have come in obedience to your call. That is enough.'

'I merely lit that fire because I was dull, and thought I would get a little excitement by calling you up and triumphing over you as the Witch of Endor called up Samuel. I determined you should come; and you have come. I have shown my power. A mile and half hither, and a mile and half back again to your home—three miles in the dark for me. Have I not shown my power?'

He shook his head at her. 'I know you too well, my Eustacia; I know you too well. There isn't a note in you which I don't

know; and that hot little bosom couldn't play such a cold-blooded trick to save its life. I saw a woman on Blackbarrow at dusk, looking down towards my house. I think I drew out you before you drew out me.'

The revived embers of an old passion glowed clearly in Wildeva now; and he leant forward as if about to put his face towards her cheek.

'O no,' she said, intractably moving to the other side of the decayed fire. 'What did you mean by that?'

'Perhaps I may kiss your hand, then?'

'No, you may not.'

'Then I may shake your hand?'

'No.'

'Then I wish you good-bye without caring for either. Good-bye, good-bye.'

She returned no answer, and with the bow of a dancing-master he vanished on the other side of the pool as he had come.

Eustacia sighed: it was no fragile maiden sigh, but a sigh which shook her like a shiver. Whenever a flash of reason darted like an electric light upon her lover—as it sometimes would—and showed his imperfections, she shivered thus. But it was over in a second, and she loved on. She knew that he trifled with her; but she loved on. She scattered the half-burnt brands, went indoors immediately, and up to her bedroom without a light. Amid the rustles which denoted her to be undressing in the darkness, other heavy breaths frequently came; and the same kind of shudder occasionally moved through her when, ten minutes later, she lay on her bed asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

QUEEN OF NIGHT.

EUSTACIA VYE was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a faultless goddess, that is, those which make not quite a faultless woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious interchange of caresses and blows as those we endure now.

She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy; without

ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. It closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow.

Her nerves extended into those tresses, and her temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed, she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx. If, in passing under one of the Egdon banks, any of its thick skeins were caught, as they sometimes were, by a prickly tuft of the large *Ulex Europæus*—which will act as a sort of hair-brush—she would go back a few steps, and pass against it a second time.

She had deep Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came, and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so: she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils conduced to the same impression.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. Viewed sideways, the closing-line of her lips formed, with almost geometric precision, the curve so well known in the arts of design as the *cima-recta*, or ogee. The sight of such a flexible bend as that on grim Egdon was quite an apparition. It was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin. One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles; yet behold a specimen was here. So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom, one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years.

Her presence brought memories of Bourbon roses, jacinths, and rubies, a tropical midnight, an eclipse of the sun, a portent; her moods recalled lotus-eaters, the march in *Athalie*, the Communion Service; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight re-arrangement of hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old

helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dewdrops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases.

But celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour, had proved to be somewhat thrown away on netherward Egdon. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biased her development. Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto. Her appearance accorded well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the gloomy and stifled warmth within her. She differed from Demeter's daughter as a queenly bondswoman differs from a bondaged queen. But true Tartarean dignity sat upon her brow, and not factitiously, or with marks of constraint, for it had grown in her with years.

Across the upper part of her head she wore a thin fillet of black velvet, restraining the luxuriance of her shady hair, in a way which added much to this class of majesty by irregularly clouding her forehead. 'Nothing can embellish a beautiful face more than a narrow band drawn crosswise over the brow,' says Richter. Some of the neighbouring girls wore coloured ribbon for the same purpose; but if anyone suggested coloured ribbon to Eustacia Vye she answered with, 'Do I look as if I would wear coloured ribbon in my hair?' and there was no rejoinder.

Scents for the person (which country-girls are fond of preparing from flowers) and metallic ornaments she contemned equally with variegated colours. When she saw less sophisticated maidens with their decoctions of lavender and boy's-love she laughed and went on; unwittingly chiming in with Plautus, Martial, Ben Jonson, and others, in holding that, though rather than smell sour a woman's robe should smell sweet, better even than smelling sweet is that it should not smell at all.

Whence did a woman living on a heath acquire these advanced tastes?

Budmouth was her native place, a fashionable sea-side resort between twenty and thirty miles distant. She was the daughter of the bandmaster of a regiment which had been quartered there; a Belgian, who met his future wife during her trip thither with her father the Captain. The marriage was scarcely in accord with the old man's wishes, for the general airiness of the bandmaster's life extended into his pockets, as was inevitable. But he did his best, made Budmouth permanently his home, took great trouble with

his child's education, the expenses of which were defrayed by the grandfather, and throve as the chief local musician till her mother's death, when he left off thriving, drank, and died also. The girl was left to the care of her grandfather, who, since three of his ribs became broken in a shipwreck, had lived in this airy perch on Egdon, a spot which had taken his fancy because the house was to be had for next to nothing, and because a remote tinge on the horizon between the hills, visible from the cottage door, was traditionally believed to be the English Channel. She hated the change; she felt like one banished; but here she was forced to abide.

Thus it happened that in Eustacia's brain were juxtaposed the strangest assortment of ideas, from old time and from new. There was no middle distance in her perspective: romantic recollections of sunny afternoons on an esplanade, with military bands, officers, and gallants around, stood like gilded uncials upon the dark tablet of surrounding Egdon. Every bizarre effect that could result from the random intertwining of watering-place glitter with the grand solemnity of a heath, were to be found in her. Seeing nothing of human life now, she imagined all the more of what she had seen.

Where did her dignity come from? By no side passage from Fitzalan or De Vere. It was the gift of heaven—it was a happy convergence of natural laws. Among other things, opportunity had of late years been denied her of learning to be undignified, for she lived lonely. Isolation on a heath renders vulgarity well-nigh impossible. It would have been as easy for the heathcroppers, bats, and snakes to be vulgar as for her. A narrow life in Budmouth might have completely demeaned her.

The only way to look queenly without realms or hearts to queen it over is to look as if you had lost them; and Eustacia did that to a triumph. In the Captain's cottage she could suggest mansions she had never seen. Perhaps that was because she frequented a vaster mansion than any of them, the open hills. Like the summer condition of the place around her, she was an embodiment of the phrase 'a populous solitude'—apparently so listless, void, and quiet, she was really busy and full.

To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. She seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover. Devotion she wanted from any practical quarter which should not absolutely disgrace her.

She could exhibit an implacable look at times, but it was directed less against human beings than against certain creatures of her mind, the chief of these being destiny, through whose inter-

ference she dimly fancied it arose that love alighted only on gliding youth—that any love she might win would sink simultaneously with the sand in the glass. She thought of it with an ever resentful consciousness of cruelty, which tended to breed actions of reckless unconventionality framed to snatch a year's, a week's, even an hour's passion from anywhere while it could be won. Through want of it she had sung without being merry, possessed without enjoying, outshone without triumphing. Her loneliness deepened her desire. On Egdon, coldest and meanest kisses were at famine prices; and where was a mouth matching hers to be found?

Fidelity in love for fidelity's sake had no attraction for her: fidelity because of love's grip had much. A blaze of love, and extinction, was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years. On this head she knew by prevision what most women learn only by experience: she had mentally walked round love, told the towers thereof, considered its palaces; and concluded that love was but a doleful joy. Yet she desired it, as one in a desert would be thankful for brackish water. Bad, but nothing better, was what she said of love.

She often repeated her prayers: not at particular times, but, like the unaffectedly devout, when she desired to pray. Her prayer was always spontaneous, and often ran thus: 'O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die.'

Her high gods were William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon Bonaparte, as they had appeared in the Lady's History used at the establishment in which she was educated. Her chief-priest was Byron: her antichrist a well-meaning polemical preacher at Budmouth, of the name of Slatters. Had she been a mother, she would have christened her boys such names as Saul or Sisera in preference to Jacob or David, neither of whom she admired. Eustacia liked to ponder on men at high pressures of love or of revenge; and hence such a career as that of Joab, his rare combination of Machiavellian statecraft with reckless daring, his long nourished revenge on Abner for the death of his brother, she was never tired of perusing. At school she used to side with the Philistines in several battles, and had wondered if Pontius Pilate were as handsome as he was frank and fair.

Thus she was a girl of some forwardness of mind; indeed, weighed in relation to her situation among the very rereward of thinkers, very original. Her instincts towards social nonconformity were at the root of this. In the matter of holidays her mood was that of horses who, when turned out to grass, enjoy

looking upon their kind at work on the highway. She only valued rest to herself when it came in the midst of other people's labour. Hence she hated Sundays, when all was at rest, and often said they would be the death of her. To see the heathmen in their Sunday condition, that is, with their hands in their pockets, their boots newly oiled, and not laced up (a particularly Sunday sign), walking leisurely among the turves and furze-faggots they had cut during the week, and kicking them critically as if their use were unknown, was a fearful heaviness to her. To relieve the tedium of this untimely day she would overhaul the cupboards containing her grandfather's old charts and other rubbish, humming the Saturday-night ballads of the country people the while. But on Saturday nights she would frequently sing a psalm, and it was always on a week-day that she read the Bible, that she might be unoppressed with a sense of doing her duty.

Such views of life were to some extent the natural begettings of her situation upon her nature. To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue. The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapours. An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine.

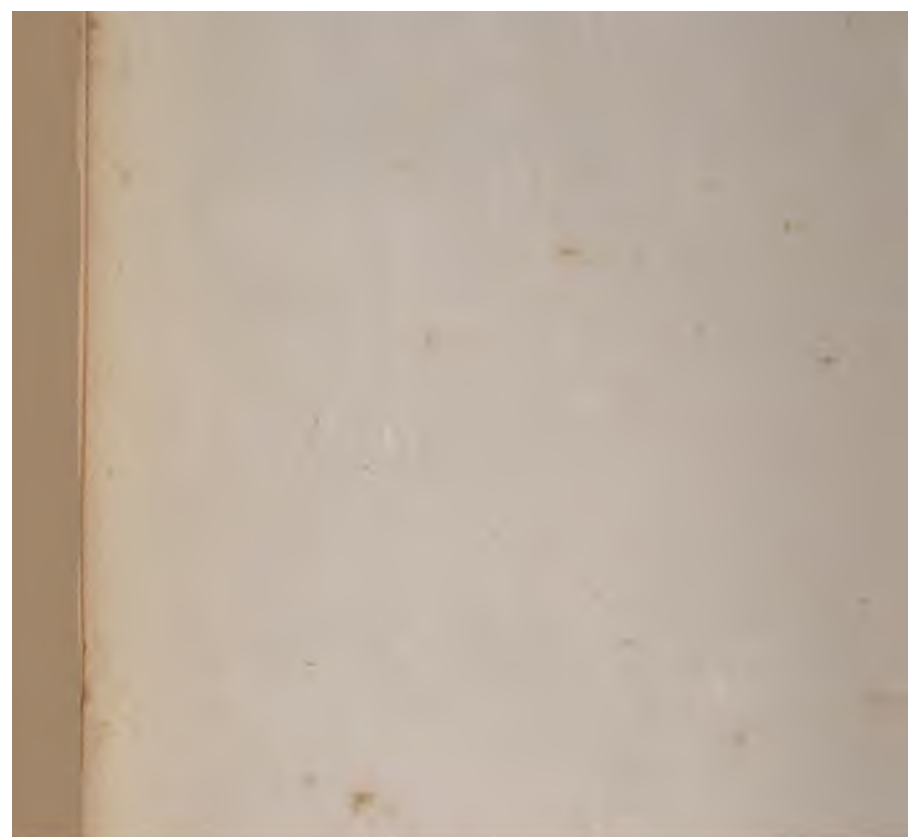
Eustacia was weary of too many things, unless she could have been weary of more; she knew too much, unless she could have known all. It was a dangerous rock to be tossed on at her age. She had done with the dreams and interests of young maidhood; the dreams and interests of wifedom she had never begun, and we see her in a strange interspace of isolation. She had got beyond the vision of some marriage of inexpressible glory; yet, though her passions were in full vigour, she cared for no meaner union. To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in its essence, for it connotes a mind that, though disappointed, forswears retreat. But, if congenial to philosophy, it is apt to be dangerous to the commonwealth. In a world where doing means marrying, and the commonwealth is one of hearts and hands, the same peril attends the condition.

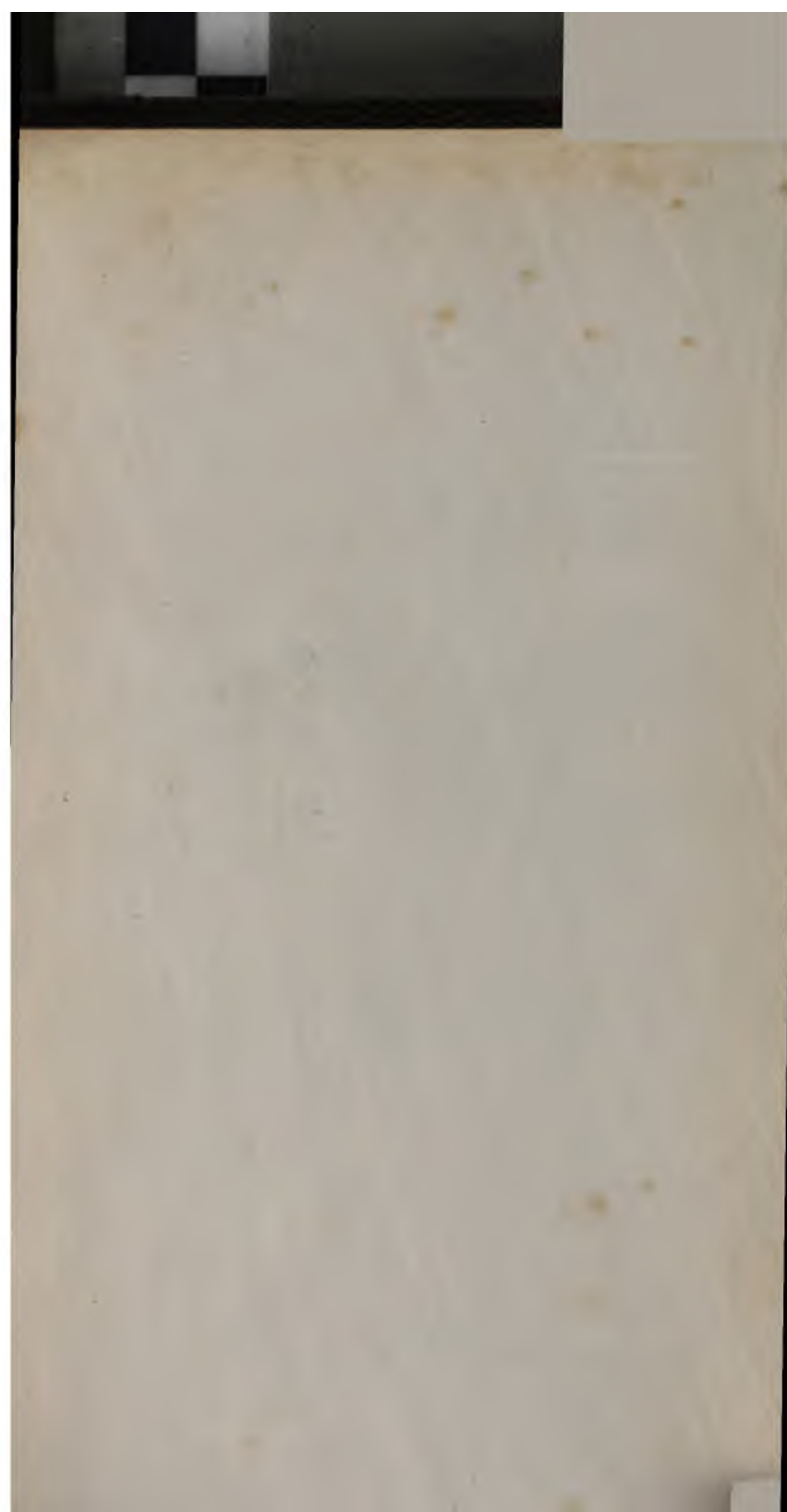
And so we see our Eustacia—for she was lovable sometimes—arriving at that stage of enlightenment which feels that nothing is worth while, and filling up the spare hours of her existence by idealizing Wildeve, a man beneath her in position, for want of a better object. This was the sole reason of his ascendancy: she

knew it herself. At moments her pride rebelled against her passion for him, and she even had longed to be free. But there was only one circumstance which could dislodge him, and that was the advent of a greater man.

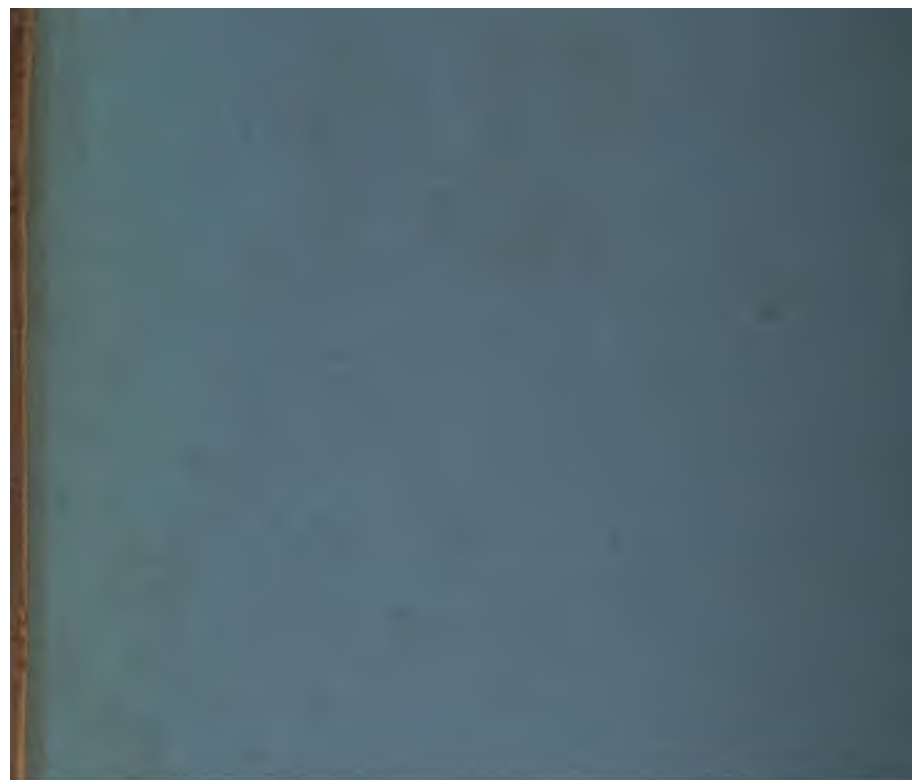
For the rest, she suffered fearfully from depression of spirits, and took slow walks to recover them, in which she carried her grandfather's telescope and her grandmother's hourglass—the latter because of a peculiar pleasure she derived from watching a material representation of time's gradual glide away. She seldom schemed, but when she did her plans showed rather the comprehensive strategy of a general than the small arts called womanish, though she could return oracles of Delphian ambiguity when she did not choose to be direct. In heaven she will probably sit between the Heloises and the Cleopatras.

(To be continued.)









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